



FLOATING-LEAF PONDWEED

Potamogeton natans



There are 32 other native pondweed species in New York and 28 in Vermont. Floating-leaf pondweed is very common throughout the Lake Champlain basin. The shape of the floating leaves depends on the speed of the current, with faster current resulting in more elongate the leaves and less cordate leaf bases.

Habitat Preference

Found on the surface of quiet waters of lakes, ponds, marshes, swamps, swales, sloughs and slow-moving streams. Requires water high in nutrients.

CHARACTERISTICS:

Vegetative

- Leaf type: oblong-elliptic.
- Leaf shape: slightly heart shaped at base, oval-elliptic (floating), blades (submersed).
- Leaf arrangement: alternate (both submersed and floating).
- Leaf position: attaches to stalk and looks pinched .

Flower

- Number of petals/sepals: 4.
- Color: green/red.
- Attachment: Fruit: small, dry, does not open to release seed when ripe.

Seed

- One seed in the fruit.





FLOATING-LEAF PONDWEED

Potamogeton natans

Cultural History Notes

The genus name for pondweeds, *Potamogeton*, means "river neighbor"--from the Greek "potamos" for river and "geiton" for neighbor.

Ecological Contributions to Lake Champlain

Biological

- Fruit provides valuable grazing opportunities for ducks and geese.

Chemical

- Oxygenates of lakes and ponds.

Physical

- Provides habitats for many micro and macro invertebrates.

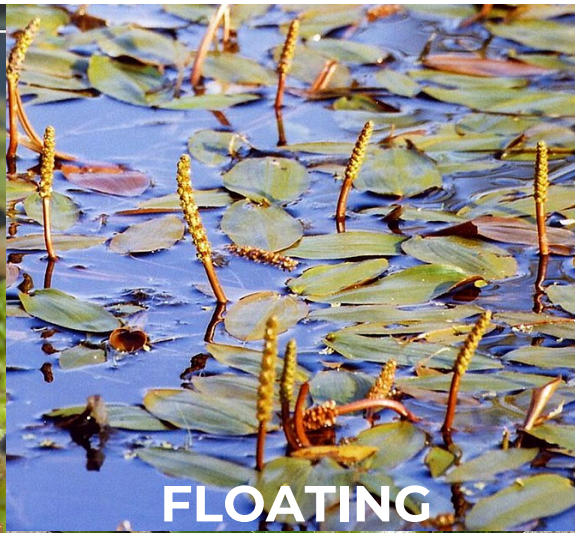
Similar Species

Variable-leaf pondweed (*Potamogeton gramineus*)

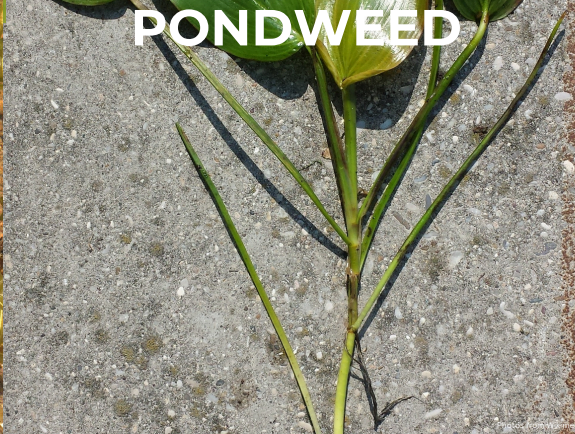
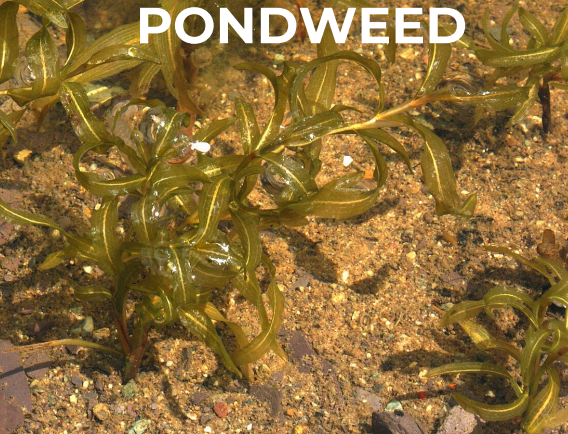
- Also called grassy pondweed, this native aquatic plant can be found in similar habitat to floating pondweed.
- Its appearance is highly variable depending on its environment.



VARIABLE-LEAF PONDWEED



FLOATING PONDWEED



How to differentiate floating pondweed and variable-leaf pondweed

- These two species can appear very similar on the waters' surface. To distinguish them, carefully lift the plant out of the water. Floating pondweed will have a few under-developed submersed leaves, while variable-leaf pondweed is more likely to have several, larger submersed leaves.

Scan to learn more about Lake Champlain's native aquatic plants!



The Lake Champlain Committee is a watershed-based nonprofit that uses science-based advocacy, education, and collaborative action to protect and restore water quality, safeguard natural habitats and ensure recreational access in the Lake Champlain Basin.



THIS PROJECT HAS BEEN FUNDED WHOLLY OR IN PART BY THE UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY UNDER ASSISTANCE AGREEMENT #L2004A007070 TO NEWPC IN PARTNERSHIP WITH THE LAKE CHAMPLAIN BASIN PROGRAM.