

W.1 FLOATING PONDWEED/DRYWENDE FONTEINKRUID

(*Potamogeton thunbergii* Cham. & Schlechtd.)

Family: Potamogetonaceae

(Compiled by the Botanical Research Institute, Pretoria)

A rooted perennial herb, usually with unbranched stems up to 1 m long. Both floating and submerged leaves may be present and they always have distinct stalks. Leaves are broadly to narrowly lance-shaped and vary in length from 50 to 200 mm. The floating leaves are dark green, shiny and leathery. Membrane-like sheaths are found at the base of all leaves. Many small green flowers are crowded into spikes which emerge from the water. The rounded fruits are about 4 mm long and contain a single seed.

Related species

Floating pondweed can be distinguished from the other two Southern African species of *Potamogeton* with leaves wider than 4 mm in that all its mature leaves are floating and they have distinct stalks.

Distribution

Floating pondweed is recorded from South West Africa/Namibia, Botswana, Transvaal, Orange Free State, Lesotho, Natal and the Eastern Cape. It is common in Transvaal and occurs further north in Malawi and in tropical East Africa.

Ecology

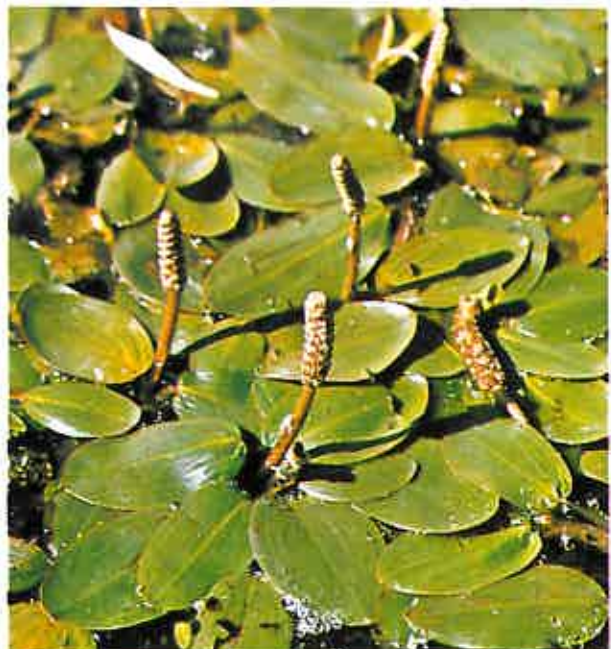
It grows on mudbanks and in still to slow-flowing water.

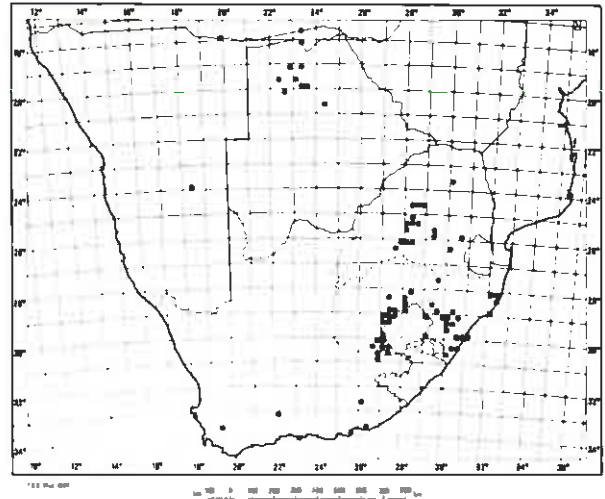
Importance

This plant may be a troublesome weed, especially in small dams.

Legislation

There is no legislation for the control of floating pondweed.





Notes

The scientific name is derived from the Greek *potamos* = river, and *geiton* = neighbour; Thunberg was a well-known Swedish plant collector who visited South Africa towards the end of the 18th century.

Species Number: 0058.000-00600

Literature

- MUSIL, C.F., 1973. *Water plants of Natal - a guide to the important species*. The Wildlife Protection and Conservation Society of South Africa.
- OBERMEYER, A.A., 1966. Potamogetonaceae, in Codd, L.E., De Winter, B. & Rycroft, H.B. *Flora of Southern Africa*, volume 1.
- SCULTHORPE, C.D., 1967. *The biology of aquatic vascular plants*. London: Edward Arnold.