

## W.13 SAW-WEED/WATERSAAGBLAAR

(*Najas pectinata* (Parl.) Magnus)

Family: Najadaceae

(Compiled by the Botanical Research Institute, Pretoria)

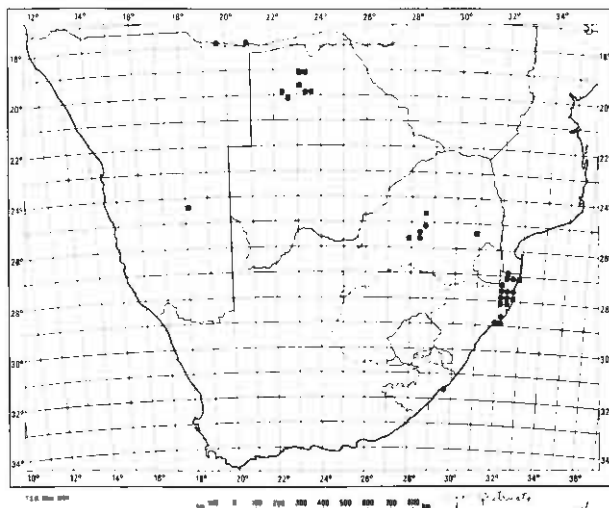
Saw-weed is a submerged, rooted water plant often forming dense, brownish-green clumps. Its repeatedly forked, brittle stems are up to 1 m long. The narrow, strap-shaped leaves are coarsely toothed on the margins and often curved. They are arranged either in whorls of three, or in pairs opposite each other, or they are crowded together. Very small, inconspicuous flowers are borne in the axils of leaves. The fruit is a small, one-seeded nut. Saw-weed reproduces by means of seed or by regenerating from plant fragments.

### Related species

Two other species of *Najas* are found in the region. They can be distinguished from saw-weed by having either prickly stems or many minute (not coarse) teeth on the leaf margins.

### Distribution

Saw-weed is found in many parts of Africa and on Madagascar. In Southern Africa it is known from South West Africa/Namibia, Botswana, Transvaal, Natal and Transkei.



### Ecology

Saw-weed flourishes in dams, pools and slow-flowing streams and canals. It tolerates slightly saline conditions and is surprisingly resistant to desiccation.

### Importance

Dense infestations of saw-weed can hinder stream-flow, especially in irrigation canals, and may



interfere with boating and fishing. The plant is a favourite food of waterfowl and plant-eating fish.

#### Legislation

There is no legislation for the control of saw-weed.

#### Notes

The scientific name is derived from *naiad*, a water nymph; *pectinatus* = divided like a comb.

**Species Number: 0064.000-00300**

#### Literature

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