

W.4 BROAD-LEAVED PONDWEED/ BREËBLAARFONTEINKRUID

(*Potamogeton schweinfurthii* A. Benn.)

Family: Potamogetonaceae

(Compiled by the Botanical Research Institute, Pretoria)

A large, rooted water plant with rounded stems up to 2 m long and up to 5 mm thick. Its leaves are submerged or the upper ones may float on the water surface. They are narrowly lance-shaped, 100 to 200 mm long and 10 to 20 mm broad and have no stalks. Conspicuous sheaths which partly enfold the stem are found at the base of the leaves. Small green flowers are borne in many-flowered spikes. The egg-shaped, shortly beaked fruits, about 4 mm long, contain a single seed.

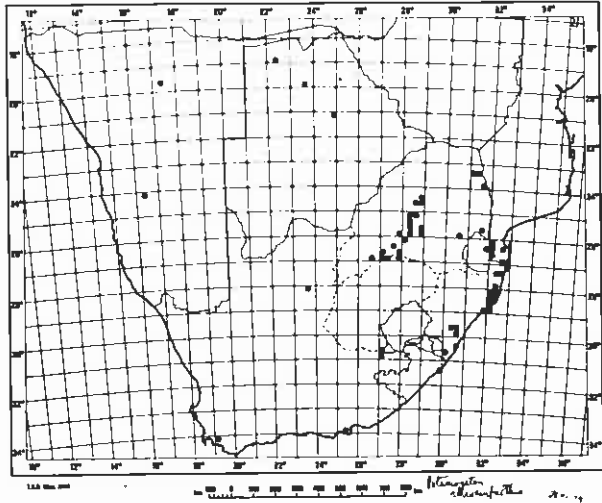
Related species

Broad-leaved pondweed can be distinguished from the other two Southern African species with submerged leaves wider than 4 mm by its stalkless, mostly submerged leaves, not finely toothed on the margin.



Distribution

Wide-spread in Eastern and tropical Africa, extending southwards to South West Africa/Namibia, the Northern Cape, Transvaal, Orange Free State, Natal, Transkei and Eastern Cape. It is common in Transvaal rivers.



Ecology

Broad-leaved pondweed grows in still and flowing water 2 to 3 m deep. It is found mainly in

fairly clear waters, and usually roots in organically enriched sand or clay.

Importance

Generally not particularly troublesome as a weed. The seeds are eaten by waterfowl.

Legislation

There is no legislation for the control of broad-leaved pondweed.

Notes

The scientific name is derived from the Greek *potamos* = river, and *geiton* = neighbour; Schweinfurth was a well-known plant collector.

Species Number: 0058.000-00500

Literature

- MUSIL, C.F., 1973. *Waterplants 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.
- WILD, H., 1961. Harmful aquatic plants in Africa and Madagascar. *Kirkia* 2: 1-66.