

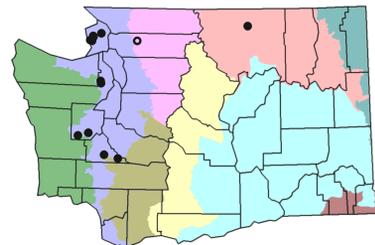
Potamogeton obtusifolius Mert. & W.D.J. Koch

blunt-leaf pondweed

Potamogetonaceae - pondweed family

status: State Sensitive, BLM strategic

rank: G5 / S2



General Description: Adapted from Douglas et al. (1998-2002) and Flora of North America (1993+): Aquatic perennial herb arising from fine, tufted roots; rhizomes absent. Stems sparsely branched, slightly compressed, 35-90 cm long, with glands up to 1 mm in diameter. Leaves all submerged, linear, tips rounded, somewhat spirally arranged, 3-8 cm x 1-3.5 mm, usually with 3 (5) veins and 1-3 rows of translucent cells adjacent to the midvein. Overlapping stipules form an inconspicuous sheath around the base of the blade, 0.5-2 cm long; the sheath is not fused to the blade.

Floral Characteristics: Inflorescences unbranched, generally rising above the surface; spikes cylindric, 0.5-1.5 cm long, with 3-8 whorls of flowers on top of thin stalks.

Fruits: Achenes egg-shaped, 2.5-3.6 x 1.5-2.5 mm, back rounded or obscurely keeled, lateral keels sometimes present, the beak short, 0.8-1 mm. Fruiting begins in August.

Identification Tips: Fruiting specimens are necessary for reliable identification. *P. obtusifolius* can be distinguished by the unique combination of linear leaves and wide fruiting inflorescences (5-7 mm wide). Turions are terminal, abundant, 3.5-7.8 cm long. *Potamogeton pusillus* ssp. *tenuissimus** also has submerged, linear leaves, but it has smaller glands, smaller leaves (1-5.5 cm x 0.2-2.5 mm), and a rounded, head-shaped inflorescence. Because hybridization is fairly common among *Potamogeton* spp., some specimens may be intermediate in morphology.

Range: Circumpolar: from AK to Newfoundland, south to Washington, D.C., on the east coast; MI west to MT and south to KS. Disjunct in WA.

Habitat/Ecology: Submerged on banks of lakes, sloughs, and slow-flowing streams, in 1-4 m (3-9 ft) of water. Associated species include other pondweeds (*Potamogeton* spp.), common bladderwort (*Utricularia vulgaris*), shortspike watermilfoil (*Myriophyllum sibiricum*), coon's tail (*Ceratophyllum demersum*), and Canadian waterweed (*Elodea canadensis*). Elevations in WA: 30-156 m (100-513 ft).

Comments: Habitat is degraded by alterations of lake shorelines and the use of herbicides to control aquatic plants. This species is rare in several North American states and provinces.

References: Douglas et al. 1998-2002, vol. 7; Flora of North America 1993+, vol. 22.



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