

FLORIDA PONDWEED

Potamogeton floridanus Small

Synonyms: none

Family: Potamogetonaceae (pondweed)

FNAI Ranks: G1/S1

Legal Status: US-none; FL-Endangered



J. Burkhalter

Field Description: Aquatic herb rooted in streambeds, with long, flexible stems and both floating and submerged leaves. **Floating leaves** with slender leaf stalks to 4.0 - 6.5 cm long; blades 4.5 - 6.6 cm long, alternate, elongated and tapered at both ends, with 7 - 11 conspicuous veins. **Submerged leaves** 2.5 - 4 cm long, narrow but not threadlike, alternate, margins entire, without leaf stalks. **Stipules** (small, thin bracts at base of leaves) present on both floating and submerged leaves, sheath-like but not fused to the base of leaves or leaf stalks. **Flower spikes** held above the water surface. **Flowers** tiny, with 4 petal-like structures. **Fruits** of this species not seen (fruit spike typical of pondweeds is shown in drawing.)

Similar Species: Florida pondweed is distinguished from other pondweeds with which it grows, such as waterthread (*Potamogeton diversifolius*), by its long-stalked floating leaves with blades tapered at both ends, and by the stipules (called stipular sheaths in some guides) which are free of the leaf bases. Waterthread has smaller, oval floating leaves.

Related Rare Species: None in Florida.

Habitat: Slow-moving blackwater streams and rivers.

Florida pondweed

Potamogeton floridanus

Best Survey Season: Spring-summer, but leaves are distinctive all year.

Range-wide Distribution: Endemic to Santa Rosa County, FL. Appears to be restricted to Blackwater River and its tributaries.

Conservation Status: None of the known populations are protected.

Protection and Management: Avoid alterations to stream hydrology; protect water quality.

References: Burkhalter 2000, Burks 2000, Coile 2000, FNA 2000, Ogden 1943, Small 1933, Wilhelm and Mohlenbrock 1986, Wunderlin 1998, Wunderlin and Hansen 2000a.

