



Potamogeton amplifolius
(POT-a-mo-JEE-ton AM-pli-FOL-ee-us)

Large-leaf pondweed, bass weed, musky weed

Potamogeton – (Gk.) *potamos*: river + *geiton*: neighbor;
amplifolius – (L.) *ampli*: large + *folius*: leaf

The old fishing guide studied the water. At last he saw what he was looking for: the broad arching leaves of large-leaf pondweed rising from the depths. The anchor created a dark cloud as it settled in the soft sediments seven feet below. This was the spot!

Description: Large-leaf pondweed has robust stems (1-3.5 mm thick) that emerge from black-scaled rhizomes (2-4 mm thick). The submersed leaves (3.5-7.2 cm wide) are the broadest of any pondweed in our region. These leaves are arched and slightly folded, as though they had been bent along the midvein to cut out a symmetrical leaf. The leaves have stalks of varying lengths (1-6 cm long) and the blade is lined with many veins (25-37).

Floating leaves are oval (5-10 cm long, 2.5-5 cm wide) on long stalks (8-30 cm).

The floating leaves also have many veins, with about 25% of them more prominent than the rest. Stipules of both submersed and floating leaves are large (3.5-12 cm long). The stipules are free, green or brown-tinted, and taper to a sharp point. (See *Potamogeton* spp. for a description of stipules.)

The fruiting stalk is stout with flowers – and later fruit – in a dense spike (2-5 cm long). Each fruit (4-5.5 mm) is oval to egg-shaped, with a small beak (1 mm long). The surface of the fruit has three low, rounded ridges.

Similar Species: Large-leaf pondweed is sometimes confused with Illinois pondweed (*P. illinoensis*) or white-stem pondweed (*P. praelongus*). Illinois pondweed has narrower submerged leaves with fewer veins (9-19). It also has a sharp-keeled fruit and floating leaves with stalks that are shorter than the blades. White-stem pondweed has submerged leaves directly attached to the stem. The stipules are fibrous and the tip of each leaf is usually boat-shaped.

Origin & Range: Native; found throughout Wisconsin; range includes much of U.S.

Habitat: Large-leaf pondweed is found most frequently in soft sediments in water one-to-several meters deep. It is sensitive to increased turbidity and suffers when top-cut by motor boats.

Through the Year: Large-leaf pondweed can sprout shoots from overwintering rhizomes. It also sometimes survives the winter as an evergreen. Flowering occurs by midsummer and fruits mature by late summer.

Value in the Aquatic Community:

The broad leaves of *P. amplifolius* offer shade, shelter and foraging opportunities for fish. Abundant production of large nutlets makes this a valuable waterfowl food.

