

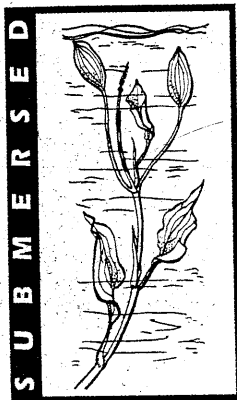
SUBMERSED PLANTS
WITH ENTIRE
LEAVES - ALTERNATE
OR BASAL

Potamogeton pectinatus (POT-a-mo-JEE-ton PECK-tin-a-tus)

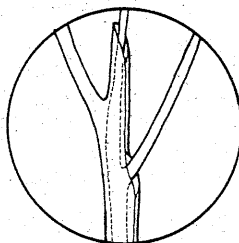
Sago pondweed

Potamogeton - (Gk.) *potamos*: river + *geiton*: neighbor;
pectinatus - (L.) comb-like (referring to narrow leaves)

*With a snarl the outboard motor kicked out of the water.
The lake was so murky that the skiers didn't realize how
shallow it had become. The hushed prop was tangled in a
green mass that had been sago pondweed.*



Description: The stems (30-80 cm long) of sago pondweed sprout from slender rhizomes that are peppered with starchy tubers (1-1.5 cm long). The leaves (3-10 cm long, 0.5-1.5 mm wide) are very thin and resemble pine needles,



ending in a sharp point. Each branch may be forked several times into a spreading, fan-like arrangement. Stipules are fused to the leaves for most of their length, creating a stipular sheath (1-3 cm long). (See *Potamogeton* spp. for a description of stipules.)

oval to egg-shaped in outline. The fruit is rounded on the back with a short beak and sometimes a low dorsal ridge, two lateral ridges or both.

Similar species: Sago pondweed resembles two other pondweeds with needle-like leaves, but is much more common than either of them.

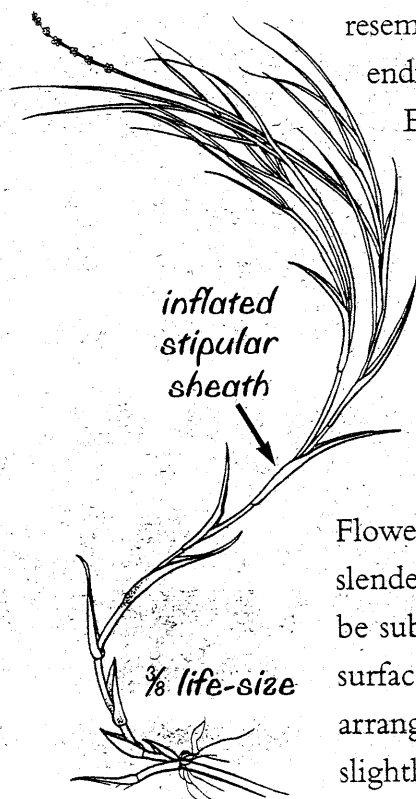
Thread-leaf pondweed (*P. filiformis*) has leaves with a blunt, notched tip and a smaller fruit than sago pondweed.

Sheathed pondweed (*P. vaginatus*) also has a blunt, notched tip and is easily distinguished from sago by the inflated sheaths of its stipules (2.5-5 mm wide). Sheathed pondweed is listed as **Threatened** in Wisconsin.

Origin & Range: Native; common in Wisconsin; range includes most of U.S.

Habitat: Sago pondweed is widespread in lakes, ponds, streams and rivers. It is usually found in water 1-2 meters deep, but will grow much deeper at times.

Similar Species:
SHEATHED
PONDWEED

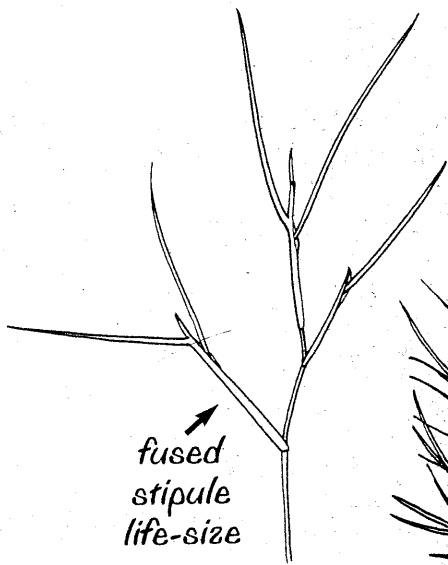


Flowers and fruit are produced on a slender stalk (3-10 cm long) that may be submersed or floating on the water surface. The flowers and fruit are arranged in small whorls that are slightly spaced apart on the stalk. This creates the appearance of beads on a string. Each fruit (3-4.5 mm long) is

stipular
sheath
6 x life-size

1/3 life-size

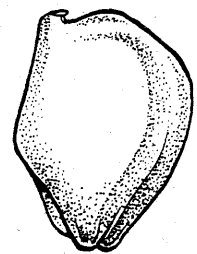
SAGO PONDWEED



It grows in a variety of sediment types and a wide range of water conditions. It can sometimes be found as the last surviving rooted plant in very turbid water.

Through the Year: Sago pondweed overwinters by its hardy rhizomes and tubers. Under some conditions, seeds may also germinate. Flowering occurs early in the growing season and fruit is produced by midsummer. Tubers are produced on the rhizomes throughout the growing season. The foliage dies back in the fall.

Value in Aquatic Community: Sago pondweed is considered one of the top food producers for waterfowl. Both the fruit and tubers are heavily grazed and are considered critical for a variety of migratory waterfowl. Sago also provides food and shelter for young trout and other juvenile fish.



nutlet
10 x life-size

