

# SFI Biodiversity Species Fact Sheet

## Tennessee Pondweed (*Potamogeton tennesseensis*)

Globally Critically Imperiled Plant Species; State Rank: S1 (critically imperiled) Global Rank: G2G3 (imperiled to vulnerable)

### Identification

Tennessee pondweed is a perennial aquatic that is native to streams, ponds, and rivers that are clear of sediment. Leaves float on the water, 0.75-1.5 in. wide and 2-5 in. long; submerged leaves are often much smaller. Leaves are attached to a long stem. Rhizomes, or underground stems with lateral shoots, are often present. This plant can be misidentified as American pondweed, however American pondweed has narrow, submerge leaves that are 12 in. long and prefers calmer, slow-moving waterbodies.



### Biology-Natural History

Tennessee pondweed has a limited range and is rare in every state it is present. The plant flowers mid-spring through the fall, then produces a small greenish brown fruit in July through October. More surveys are needed to better understand the natural history and find new populations so they can be protected.



### Distribution & Habitat

This plant is found in Kentucky, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Tennessee, Virginia, and West Virginia. This plant is expected to be in Maryland but has not been found. Only 10 populations are thought to have good to excellent viability, with another 39 locations vulnerable to loss or degradation. Slow to fast moving streams or rivers that are free from pollution are especially important. This plant generally prefers cooler waters and is found at about 600 to 3,000 feet in elevation.

### Conservation Concerns

Habitat loss and degradation through altered stream flow or reduced water quality are especially important. Known populations have been lost due to dams, surface mining, bridge replacements, and converting land to agriculture. Silviculture and agriculture can both create sedimentation or have impacts from herbicide runoff. Nutrient loading from crop or livestock have been problematic, as has trampling by livestock.

### Management Practices

Habitat buffers and improved habitat connectivity would benefit this plant. Ensuring high water quality and stream flow that is unimpeded and unaltered is also important. Riparian buffers and using Pennsylvania best management practices would help ensure stream health and protect this plant. If anyone observes this species, they should call the jurisdictional agency, DCNR Bureau of Forestry at 717-787-3444.