

## August 2022 Plant of the Month



*Potamogeton epihydrus* Rafinesque; Ribbon-leaf pondweed

The *Plant of the Month* for August is a true aquatic plant. Ribbon-leaf pondweed is a native submerged aquatic species native to North America. It is a member of the Pondweed family, Potamogetonaceae. It is found in New Jersey's freshwater tidal rivers and enriched lakes and streams. Hough (1983) shows it as a state-wide species with herbarium vouchers collected for most counties.

Ribbon-leaf pondweed is one of number of pondweeds native or introduced to the state. The *Plant of the Month* is differentiated from the other species by a number of character. Included are its large oval floating leaves, and the ribbon-like submerged leaves. The submerged leaves have a distinct set of enlarged cells in the center of the leaf (photo, right) that separates this species from others growing in New Jersey waters.

There are no known uses specifically for ribbon-leaf pondweed, but the genus had Native American uses for a variety of cultural aspects such as medicine. Hunters would identify the plant to hunter deer. Deer would wade into ponds and submerge their heads while eating this plant, making them vulnerable (Moerman, 1998). The *Plant of the Month* is in fruit now and will persist for a few more weeks. Search quiet waters of lake edges, stream and freshwater tidewaters for this interesting species.

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