

Clasping-leaf Pondweed

Potamogeton richardsonii

-Clasping-leaf Pondweed, (a.k.a .Redhead Pondweed) has oval to somewhat lance-shaped leaves that clasp the stem. The base of each leaf is heart-shaped and covers one-half to three-quarters of the stem circumference. The axils of each leaf have a fibrous stipule that soon disintegrates, leaving a beard of white fibers at the leaf node. No floating leaves are produced.

-The fruiting stalks of Clasping-leaf Pondweed develop in the upper leaf axils. The cylindrical spikes are packed with fruit. Each olive-green fruit is plump and round with a prominent beak.

-Stems emerge in spring from over-wintering rhizomes. Flowers appear by early to midsummer and fruits develop by mid-growing season. There may be limited reproduction from seed when conditions are favorable.

-The fruit of Clasping-leaf Pondweed can be locally important food source for a variety of ducks and geese. The leaves and stems are colonized by invertebrates and offer foraging opportunities and cover for fish.

-*Potamogeton richardsonii* is named after its discoverer, Sir John Richardson (1787-1865). Richardson was a Scottish surgeon, explorer, and natural historian. D. A. Stewart stated, "The plants of northern Canada named by and for Richardson would make a garden of respectable size, and the animals named by and for him would make a considerable zoo."

-As a fisherman myself, I highly recommend the planting of submersed aquatic vegetation such as Clasping-leaf Pondweed, Large-leaved Pondweed, and Sago Pondweed. The more diversity there is in an ecosystem, the better!

