



Centre for  
Ecology & Hydrology

NATURAL ENVIRONMENT RESEARCH COUNCIL

Centre for Aquatic Plant Management

## Information Sheet 11 Broad-Leaved Pondweed

*Potamogeton natans* is found mainly in static or slow-flowing water up to about 1.5 m deep. It has rhizomes buried in the mud from which leaf and flower stalks

grow each spring. The leaf stalks produce a flat leaf blade (lamina) which floats on the surface. The veins in the leaf are more or less parallel converging at the tip, unlike Amphibious Bistort (*Persicaria amphibia*) which is very similar but has a central midrib with veins branching off each side. Flowers emerge above the water surface and are a dull yellow/green colour. Seeds are produced but spread is principally by rhizomes.

The leaves of this plant can form a dense surface cover of the water impeding fishing and other forms of recreation. It is often found in streams and drainage ditches where their numerous leaves can impede flow and so create a land drainage problem.

### Mechanical control

Short-term control, for at best one season, can be achieved by cutting as late in the season as possible to reduce the risk of regrowth. New leaves will form from rhizomes later in the season and in the following spring. Because alternate nodes on the rhizomes have buds, breaking or cutting the rhizomes does not control the plant and physical removal of the whole rhizome by dredging is the only effective long-term method of mechanical control.

### Chemical control

Unlike the Water-lilies, spraying the floating leaves with glyphosate does not give satisfactory control. The treated leaves die off, giving the impression that the plant has been controlled, but new leaves emerge usually within a matter of weeks.

Broad-leaved Pondweed has been controlled with dichlobenil (Midstream GSR, Casoron G or Luxan) early in the spring when growth is just starting, but well before floating leaves are formed. Once the floating leaves have been formed growth slows down and the herbicide is no longer effective. However, it has been noted that the plant can be controlled later in the season, if the plant is first cut so that new leaves are stimulated to grow and, at the same time or immediately afterwards, the plant is treated with dichlobenil. Even so, treatment is likely to be most effective in the earlier part of the season.

### Environmental control

This species is susceptible to shade which can be created by planting trees or by using floating opaque material. Deepening of the channel, lake or pond to over 2 m may reduce the spread of the plant.

## Biological control

There is no known biological control agent for this plant.

## Best option

Apply Midstream GSR, Casoron G or Luxan early in the spring before the floating leaves are formed.

