

Vascular Plants of Williamson County

Stuckenia pectinata – SAGO PONDWEED, FENNEL-LEAF PONDWEED [Potamogetonaceae]

Stuckenia pectinata (L.) Börner, SAGO PONDWEED, FENNEL-LEAF PONDWEED. Aquatic perennial herb, submersed, clonal via fragmentation forming dense mats and colonies, rhizomatous or unattached, fibrous-rooted in muck but most without roots, with principal branches of different lengths forming \perp to rooted rhizome or main axis, with repeatedly forked photosynthetic shoots; shoots wispy and flexible, having only cauline leaves, glabrous; rhizomes horizontal (if buried), to 1 mm diameter, often nongreen, finely striped; adventitious roots 1–4 per older node; sometimes with a winter tuber terminating shoots, tuber ovoid, ca. 3×1.5 mm, subtended by an ovate, brown bract, enclosed by a sheathing, transparent bract. **Stems:** threadlike, 0.2–1 mm diameter, green or aging tan to whitish, flexible. **Leaves:** alternate distichous (but opposite subtending inflorescence), simple with sheath and apparently having a ligule (= fused free tips of 2 colorless stipules that are otherwise fused to leaf sheath); sheath open around stem and younger leaves and abscising with blade, in range sheath 7.5–14 mm long, green but membranous and \pm colorless on margins, the ligulelike projection lanceolate, 1.2–3.5 mm long, colorless, initially flat becoming inrolled, acute to rounded at tip; blade linear, $55\text{--}150 \times 0.4\text{--}1.2$ mm, bright green, entire, narrowly acute at tip, \pm crescent-shaped to hemicircular in \times -section, with 2 longitudinal air chambers separated by midvein, without stomates. **Inflorescence:** interrupted spike, submersed, terminal and axillary, of 4–14 flowers mostly opposite decussate but sometimes 1–3 flowers solitary at node, glabrous; in bud spike enclosed by sheathing bases of a pair of subtending leaves; in bud peduncle unexpanded, elongating 45–65+ mm long in flower and to 115 mm in fruit; rachis at anthesis compact becoming elongated (to 22 mm long) and unequally separating flowers and fruits. **Flower:** bisexual, radial, 3.5–6 mm across; **perianth (tepals)** 4 in 1 series, stalked from base of stamens (also treated as staminal appendages), cupped and broadly ovate to roundish, $1\text{--}2 \times 1\text{--}2.2$ mm, brown to orangey brown, overlapping in bud; **stamens** 4, each fused with tepal stalk; anthers dithecal, each sac ovoid, $0.6\text{--}2 \times 0.3\text{--}0.5$ mm, curved inward, light yellowish to whitish with fine red midline, longitudinally dehiscent; pollen pale to light yellow; **pistils** 4, free, 1.1–2 mm long; ovaries superior, urn-shaped, 0.4–1 mm wide, golden brown, each pistil 1-chambered with 1 ovule; styles constricted to 0.3–0.4 mm wide between ovary and stigma; stigmas 0.5–1 mm wide, dull rose to greenish, \pm wrinkled or warty. **Fruits:** drupelets, 4, indehiscent, drupelet with 1-seeded stone, sessile, \pm D-shaped, 3.5–4 mm long, yellow-brown to brown, rounded at base, netted-veined, without fleshy pulp; beak erect, 0.5–1.1 mm long.

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