

Natural Heritage Resource Highlight: Narrow-leaved Spatterdock (*Nuphar sagittifolia*)

Global Rarity Rank: G5T2- Globally Secure **State Rarity Rank:** S1-Critically Imperiled

Legal Status: Federal Listing-None / State Listing-Threatened



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Narrow-leaved spatterdock is a rare member of the water-lily family (Nymphaeaceae) and is distinguished by narrow leaves floating above a mass of filmy submerged foliage and topped by yellow flowers. Unlike the more common spatterdock (*Nuphar advena*), which forms thickets along marsh edges, narrow-leaved spatterdock generally grows mid-current, its narrow leaves pointing upstream during the incoming tide and aiming downstream as the tide moves out. This species main range is restricted to eastern North Carolina, though it is also known from a few sites in South Carolina (Fernald 1942). In Virginia, narrow-leaved spatterdock is considered extremely rare and occurs only in marshes bordering the Chickahominy River. Threats to the species include water pollution and activities that threaten natural river currents. Surveys for this species can be conducted during the entire time its distinctive leaves are visible from April – October (Weakley, 2012). Please note that this species is listed as threatened by the Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (VDACS).

As of 2024, 1 extant occurrence consisting of multiple populations of this state rare plant was documented in the Chickahominy River and its tributaries Diascund Creek and Mill Creek, in the coastal zone counties of Charles City, James City and New Kent.

Literature Cited

Fernald, M.L. 1942. The seventh century of additions to the flora of Virginia: contributions from the Gray Herbarium of Harvard University CXLV:396-398.

Weakley, A. S., J. C. Ludwig, and J. F. Townsend. 2012. Flora of Virginia. Bland Crowder, ed. Foundation of the Flora of Virginia Project Inc., Richmond. Fort Worth: Botanical Research Institute of Texas Press. p. 736.