

**Prioritization process report<sup>1</sup> for: *Aponogeton distachyos* L.**

*Aponogeton distachyos* was added to the EPPO Alert List in 2024. The EPPO Panel on Invasive Alien Plants prioritized *A. distachyos* during the 31st meeting of the Panel in 05-2026. The output of the prioritization process is that *Aponogeton distachyos* is added to the EPPO List of Invasive Alien Plants and is a priority for PRA. This report was reviewed and approved by the Panel on Invasive Alien Plants in 2026.

26-31102

**Section A - Prioritization process scheme for the elaboration of different lists of invasive alien plants (pests or potential pests) for the area under assessment**

**Init1. Enter the name of the pest**

*Aponogeton distachyos*

**Init2. Indicate the taxonomic position and synonyms**

Preferred name: *Aponogeton distachyos* C. Linnaeus

Common names: Cape pond lily [en], Cape pondweed [en], aponogéton à deux épis [fr]

| - Plantae  
 |-- Magnoliophyta  
 |--- Angiospermae  
 |---- Basal monocotyledons  
 |----- Alismatales  
 |----- Aponogetonaceae  
 |----- Aponogeton  
 |----- Aponogeton distachyos

**Init3. Clearly define the area for prioritization**

EPPO region (Albania, Algeria, Austria, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Guernsey, Hungary, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Jersey, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, The Republic of North Macedonia, Malta, Moldova, Montenegro, Morocco, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Russia, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Tunisia, Türkiye, Ukraine, United Kingdom, Uzbekistan).

**Init4. Provide the reasons for performing this prioritization, and detail any prioritization reports available for the assessed species.**

*Aponogeton distachyos* is listed as an EPPO Alert List species since 2024. The species is reported as an escaped horticultural plant in the EPPO region.

**A.1. Is the plant species known to be alien in all, or a significant part, of the area under assessment?**

Yes

*Aponogeton distachyos* native to South Africa.

<sup>1</sup> Using EPPO (2012) PM 5/6 EPPO prioritization process for invasive alien plants. *EPPO Bulletin*, 42, 463-474.

**A.2. Is the plant species established in at least a part of the area under assessment?**

Yes, use the justification tab to describe the area where the species is established, and the area of potential establishment, considering major factors such as climatic conditions and soil conditions.

**Geographical distribution**

**EPPO region:** Belgium, France, Ireland, Netherlands, United Kingdom.

**A.5. How high is the spread potential of the plant in the area under assessment?**

High

*Aponogeton distachyos* can be spread by natural and human assisted mechanisms. Ripe fruits can float for a short period of time before releasing negatively buoyant seeds which can move with the water body.

Aquarium and horticultural trade, and more specifically as a pond plant. *A. distachyos* is utilised as an ornamental plant both outdoors and inside in aquaria. The species is a popular ornamental as it grows and flowers in the autumn and winter months. It may also be spread locally as a contaminant of recreational equipment. The plant may enter the natural environment as discarded plant waste. Natural spread is facilitated by seed production and ripe fruit can float.

**A.6. How high is the potential negative impact of the plant on native species, habitats and ecosystems in the area under assessment?**

List natural and semi-natural habitats where the species is known to occur based on the EUNIS habitat categorization (<http://eunis.eea.europa.eu/habitats-code-browser.jsp>),

High

Dense mats of *A. distachyos* could block waterways. It can form floating mats which can reduce light transmission and may alter the quality of the water body by reducing oxygen levels. Ecosystem services can be negatively affected, for example by reducing access to the water body or blocking irrigation channels. Species with a similar form and function have been shown to have a significant impact on native habitats.

**Habitats**

Slow moving water bodies including rivers, irrigation channels, ponds, lakes, canals and damp ditches.

**A.7. How high is the potential negative impact of the plant on agriculture, horticulture or forestry in the area under assessment?**

The habitats and the situations in which the species has negative impact on agriculture, horticulture or forestry should be listed. It includes EUNIS habitats (<http://eunis.eea.europa.eu/habitats-code-browser.jsp>).

Medium

*Aponogeton distachyos* may have indirect impacts on agriculture by blocking drainage or water ways that feed water to agricultural systems. However, a high uncertainty is given as there is no evidence for this.

**A.8. How high are the potential additional impacts (e.g. on animal and human health, on infrastructures, on recreational activities, other trade related impacts such as market losses)?**

Medium

Social and economic effects might include restriction of recreational activities (angling, boating), increased risks of flooding, and management-related costs.

Conclusion.

- The answer provided to question A.5 on the spread potential of the species assessed was: **High**
- The answer provided to question A.6 on negative impact on native species, habitats and ecosystems was: **High**
- The answer provided to question A.7 on negative impact on agriculture, horticulture or forestry was: **Medium**
- The answer provided to question A.8 on additional impacts was: **Medium**

According to the ratings provided, the assessed species falls into the:

**List of invasive alien plants (GO TO Section B)**

**Section B - Prioritization process scheme for the identification of invasive alien plants for which a PRA is needed**

**B.1. Is the plant species internationally traded or are there other existing or potential international pathways?**

List the pathway(s) as justification.

Yes, at least one international pathway is identified.

International pathways include:

- (1) Plants for planting - the species is utilised as a garden ornamental
- (2) Contaminant of plants for planting - small viable stems may be present in plant material as contaminants

**B.2. Is the risk of introduction by these international pathways identified to be superior to natural spread?**

Yes

Measures against the international pathways may achieve a reduced pest risk to the EPPO region.

**B.3. Does the plant species still have a significant area suitable for further spread in the area under assessment?**

Large area suitable for further spread. *A. distachyos* currently has a restricted distribution in the EPPO region. There is potential for spread and establishment in the EPPO region.

**Key references**

Chabrol L, Guerbaa K, Raynard P (2007) Espèces nouvelles et remarquables observées en Limousin depuis 2000. Bulletin de la Société Botanique du Centre-Ouest 38, 53-72.

Gunasekera L (2003) Cape pond lily (*Aponogeton distachyos*): South African food plant–emerging aquatic weed in Victoria. *Weedwatch* 2, 6.

Millane M, Caffrey J (2014) Risk assessment of *Aponogeton distachyos*. Non-native species Ireland.

Patinet M, Branquart E, Monty A (2023) Invasive alien aquatic and riparian plant species – Best management practice guide. LIFE RIPARIAS project, 188 pp. <https://www.riparias.be/359/>