



Flowering Rush

Butomus Umbellatus

Characteristics

Perennial aquatic herbaceous plant that emerges from winter-hardy rhizomes. It grows 1-4' high on an erect stem along shores in shallow water. In deeper water it grows submerged without producing flowers. Flowering rush is very difficult to identify when not in flower. It closely resembles many native shoreland plants, such as the common bulrush.

Leaves: Leaves are stiff, narrow, sword-shaped, triangular in cross section, and up to 3 feet above water surface.

Flowers: Arranged in umbels (umbrella-shaped). Has a distinctive spray of attractive white, pink, or purple flowers on a tall stalk. Blooming in late summer to early fall, flowers have 3 petals, 3 sepals and red anthers.

Seeds: Populations in the eastern U.S. produce seeds. Only one Minnesota population (Forest Lake) produces viable seeds.

Roots: Reproduces by vegetative spread from its rootstock in form of bulb-lets. Both seeds and bulb-lets are dispersed by water current.

(Department Of Natural Resource)

Dispersal/Spread

Both seed and rootstock pieces (bulblets) can be spread by water current. Wildlife, such as muskrats, can carry the plant to new locales. Anglers and boaters can transport flowering rush on their equipment and natural water and ice movements can carry this aquatic plant to new areas as well. This plant is available through the water garden industry for planting and has likely increased the rate of spread of flowering rush.

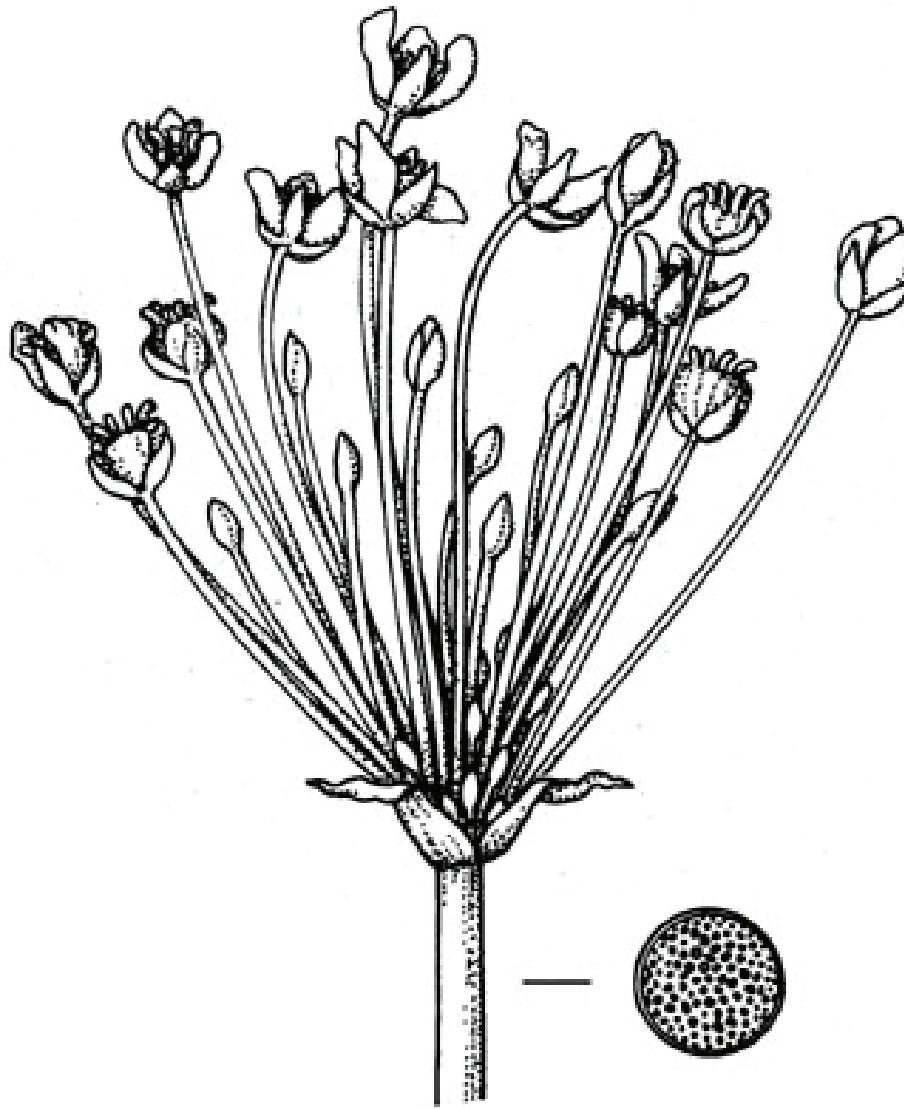
Life Cycle Biology

Reproduction of this species can be through rhizomal/rootstalk spread or by seed.

Habits/Habitat

Brought from Asia as an ornamental, flowering rush has escaped from water gardens and now is found in several northern states including Wisconsin. It prefers shallow or slow moving water where it grows as an emergent plant in marshes, backwaters and along shorelines. Plants spread by underground rhizomes, forming dense stands and crowding out native species. Reproduction from seed is uncommon.

(Department of Natural Resource)



Economic Impacts

Like most invasive species, flowering rush competes with native plants for limited resources. It can be an obstacle for boaters where this plant is present. The hardiness of this species makes it very capable of being highly invasive in the United States.

Distribution to Pacific NW and/or Oregon :

Oregon irrigates 1.9 million acres and Washington 1.8 million acres. Irrigation systems are at risk to flowering rush infestation by rhizome fragments suspended in the water being withdrawn from the Columbia System below the Snake River and Flathead River infestations.

(ODA Plant Division)

Prevention

Chemical application can be employed, but is rarely effective because herbicides wash away and there is no species-specific herbicide for this plant. Cutting flowering rush below the water surface will not kill the plant; however it will slow its spread. Since this plant grows back from its root, many cuttings may be necessary and all plant parts need to be removed from the water.

A few states regulate flowering rush due to its invasiveness. This plant is listed as banned in Connecticut and Minnesota. Vermont lists it as a class B noxious weed. If the plant is found in a body of water in Washington, the water is subject to be quarantined.

Flowering rush has been used for water garden plantings due to its attractive flower. Use of this plant is discouraged as it has been shown to invade shallow waters of lakes and wetlands, thus displacing native species.

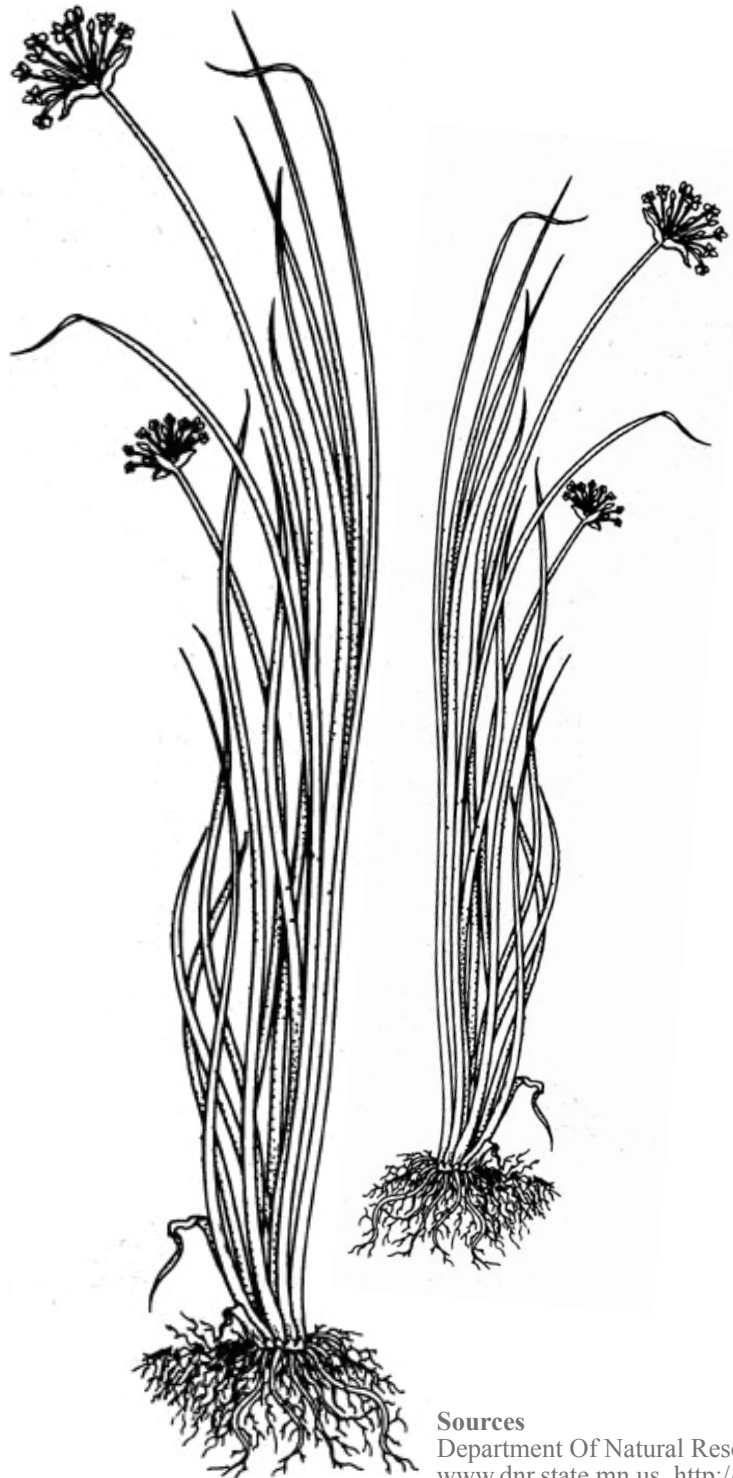
There are some simple things you can do to prevent the spread of flowering rush and other aquatic invasive plants:

- Use native plants in ornamental ponds.
- Dispose of unwanted aquarium and ornamental pond plants in the trash. DO NOT discard plants in other water bodies!
- Rinse any mud and/or debris from equipment and wading gear and drain any water from boats before leaving the launch area.
- Remove all plant fragments from your boat, trailer, and propeller prior to leaving the launch site. The transportation of plant fragments is the main introduction route to new lakes and rivers.
- Report the sighting of flowering rush to the Indiana Department of Natural

(Resources, Division of Fish and Wildlife)

Environmental Impacts

- They can dominate irrigation systems, wetlands, littoral zone of lakes, river edges and sloughs.
- In the lower Columbia, it may compete strongly with reed canary grass.



Sources
Department Of Natural Resource,
www.dnr.state.mn.us, <http://dnr.wi.gov>

ODA Plant Division,
www.oregon.gov

Resources, Division of Fish and Wildlife,
www.in.gov

Illustration
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