



Flowering Rush *Butomus umbellatus* L.

Common Names: flowering rush, grassy rush, water gladiolus

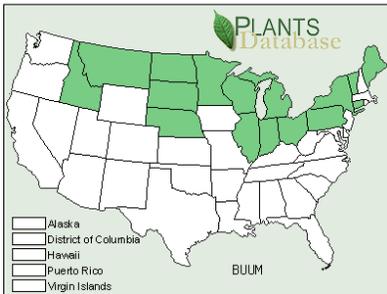
Native Origin: Eurasia - Africa, Asia, and Europe. It was likely brought to North America from Europe as a garden plant.

Description: An emergent aquatic perennial in the flowering rush family (*Butomaceae*) growing to a height of 1 – 5 feet tall. Stems are erect and triangular. Leaves are sword-like, triangular in cross-section, basal and 3 feet tall by 0.5 feet wide. Leaves grow from stout rhizomes and may remain submerged or emerge from water. Rose-colored, pink, or white flowers are 3 to 6-parted, ¾ - 1 inch wide, arranged in umbels at stalk tops and have 3 petals and 3 sepals. Plants bloom from June to August but will not flower in deep water. The fruit is an indehiscent, many-seeded capsule. Reproducing occurs by seed and short, spreading bulblet-forming rhizomes that are dispersed by water.



Habitat: Flowering rush is found in the riparian zones, water courses, and wetlands such as muddy shores of shallow water, ditches, marshes, lakes, or streams. It grows well in light (sandy), medium (loamy) and heavy (clay) soils. The plant will grow in acid, neutral or basic (alkaline) soils. It cannot grow in the shade. It requires wet soil and can grow in water.

Distribution: This species is reported from states shaded on the Plants Database map. It is reported invasive in CT, NH, VT, and WI.



Ecological Impacts: Once established in a marsh, populations increase and may continue to persist. It can spread slowly into nearby wetlands. It can tolerate water 6.5 feet deep or deeper, extending to the deepest range of emergent marsh species. Flowering rush can displace native riparian vegetation, and can be an obstacle to boat traffic. Muskrats use parts of the plant and contribute to its local spread. Boaters can also transport flowering rush on their equipment. Its wide range of hardiness (zones 3-10) makes it capable of being widely invasive in the United States.

Control and Management:



- **Manual-** Cut below water surface several times during the summer months. Isolated plants can be dug up. Remove all plant parts from the water.
- **Chemical-** It is difficult to control flowering rush with herbicides because it easily washes away from the plant's narrow leaves. Herbicides are more effective on dry banks or in very shallow water. There is no herbicide that is selective for flowering rush and care must be taken to avoid damage to valuable wetland plants.

Flowering rush in aquatic habitat
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References: <http://plants.usda.gov>, www.nps.gov/plants/alien/list/a.htm, www.google.com, www.npwr.usgs.gov/resource/plants/vascplnt/species/fambutom.htm, <http://wisplants.uwsp.edu/scripts/detail.asp?SpCode=BUTUMB>, www.uwgb.edu/BIODIVERSITY/herbarium/invasive_species/butumb01.htm, Global Invasive Species Database <http://pick5.pick.uga.edu/mp/20q?search=Butomus+umbellatus>
Czarapata, Elizabeth J. Invasive Plants of the Upper Midwest, an Illustrated Guide to their Identification and Control, 2005 p. 142-143