



# Invasive Plant Atlas of New England

## Catalog of Species Search Results



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## *Butomus umbellatus*

(Flowering rush )

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### COMMON NAME

Flowering rush

### FULL SCIENTIFIC NAME

*Butomus umbellatus* L.

### FAMILY NAME COMMON

Flowering rush family

### FAMILY SCIENTIFIC NAME

Butomaceae

### IMAGES



Flowers



Habit



Flowers



Fruit



Incursion



Roots



Habitat

## NOMENCLATURE/SYNONYMS

**Synonyms:** *Butomus umbellatus* f. *vallisneriifolius* (Sagorski) Gluck

## DESCRIPTION

### Botanical Glossary

*Butomus umbellatus* is a perennial, aquatic herb that grows from a fleshy rhizome on freshwater shorelines. It can be found in water several meters deep, and its flowering stem can reach up to 1 m (3.3 ft.) above the surface of the water. The 0.6-0.9 m (2-3 ft.) long ensiform leaves can be erect or floating on the water's surface. The leaves are three angled, fleshy and have twisted ends.

The plants flower from the summer to the fall depending on the depth of the water. The flowers are arranged in a bracted umbel. The bracts are purple-tinged, and numerous flowers are on long, slender ascending pedicels. The petals and sepals are 3-merous and are 2-2.5 cm (0.8-1 in.) in diameter. They can be white to deep pink, to purplish brown in color. The submersed form of this plant does not have flowers, and has narrow, long thin leaves. The flowers produce beaked fruits that are dark brown, 1 cm (0.4 in.) long, and split at maturity to release the seeds. Often the plant does not flower (as is the case with some populations in Connecticut), which makes its identification more difficult.

Page References Bailey 131, Crow & Hellquist 3, Fernald 92, Flora of North America 4, Gleason & Cronquist 632, Holmgren 602, Magee & Ahles 129, Newcomb 118. See reference section below for full citations.

## SIMILAR SPECIES

*Sparganium* spp. (Bur-reeds)

The leaves of *Butomus umbellatus* and *Sparganium* spp. look similar. However, when *Butomus umbellatus* is in flower they are easily told apart.

## REPRODUCTIVE/DISPERSAL MECHANISMS

The seeds of *Butomus umbellatus* float and are dispersed by water. The plant also spreads vegetatively its rhizome.

## DISTRIBUTION

*Butomus umbellatus* is native to east Asia. In Canada it is established most prominently along the St. Lawrence River in Ontario and Quebec. In the United States it is also established in the St. Lawrence River valley, and in the states of New York, Pennsylvania, Ohio, Michigan, Wisconsin, Indiana, Illinois, Minnesota, North Dakota, South Dakota, Nebraska, Montana and Idaho. In New England it occurs in Maine, Vermont and Connecticut.

## HISTORY OF INTRODUCTION IN NEW ENGLAND

*Butomus umbellatus* was first observed in 1897 in LaPrairie, Quebec (near Montreal, Canada). It was first collected in 1905 from this same location. In 1929, the plant was collected near Lake Champlain, NY. The first collection in New England was in the same year in two counties in Vermont. By the 1950s, the plant was solidly established along the St. Lawrence River. In Connecticut, it was first collected in 1943 in New Haven. There were also collections made in 1978 and 1992. It was noted that the plant was being established via rootstocks in 1930 and seeds in 1940 in New York.

## HABITATS IN NEW ENGLAND

Aquatic  
Floodplain Forest  
Lake or Pond  
River or Stream  
Yard or Garden

*Butomus umbellatus* is mostly found on shores of lakes, ponds and riverbanks. It is intolerant of salt or brackish water.

## THREATS

*Butomus umbellatus* can displace native riparian vegetation, and can be an obstacle to boat traffic. Its very wide range of hardiness (zones 3-10) gives it the potential of being widely invasive in the United States.

## MANAGEMENT LINKS

[Minnesota Department of Natural Resources](#)

## DOCUMENTATION NEEDS

Documentation required: Herbarium specimen or mounted snippet of the rhizomes or inflorescence.

Best time for documentation: Spring, summer.

## ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

[Integrated Taxonomic Information System](#)

Has general taxonomic information about the species.

[The PLANTS Database](#)

General information including a map

[Canadian Wildlife Service](#)

[Center for Aquatic and Invasive Plants](#)

[Northern Prairie Wildlife Research Center](#)

Description and map for prairie states

[Global Invasive Species Database](#)

Comprehensive information

[Invasive Plants of Wisconsin](#)

[Flora of North America](#)

## REFERENCES

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## DATA RETRIEVAL

Select a task by clicking the radio button and then click "Submit Selection."

- Formatted display as table
- Export as comma-delimited text file

## MAPS OF PLANT DISTRIBUTION IN NEW ENGLAND

Select a study area by clicking the radio button and then click "Submit Selection."

- The whole New England area
- One or more states
- One or more counties
- One or more towns (county sub-divisions)

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