

Flowering rush

Butomus umbellatus

Description

This species is listed as a restricted noxious weed by the Michigan Department of Agriculture. Flowering rush occurred in the Detroit River as early as 1918 but has become a much greater problem in recent years.

Habit

Perennial, erect, floating or submersed in water up to 2 m (6 ft) deep.

Leaves

Linear, up to 1 m (39 in) long and 0.5-1 cm (0.2-0.4 in) wide, growing from the base, triangular in cross-section.

Stems

Smooth; erect; round; 1-1.5 m (3-4.5 ft) tall.

Flowers



Pale pink, rose or white in color; 3 petals and 3 petal-like sepals, held in a many-flowered, rounded cluster with 3 bracts; held at the top of the stem, not all populations produce flowers although many in Michigan do.

Fruits and Seeds

Fruit a beaked follicle, not all populations produce fertile seed but at least some Michigan populations do so.

Habitat

Native to Eurasia. Found in rivers, lakes, emergent wetlands and ditches in waters up to 3 m (~10 ft) in depth.

Reproduction

By stout creeping rhizomes, vegetative bulbils that form in rhizome axils, some populations produce fertile seed also, seeds float and are water-dispersed, seeds, like those of many wetland species are long-lived.

Similar

Non-flowering specimens may resemble young bur-reeds (*Sparganium* spp.) or bulrushes (*Scirpus* spp.) as they may have similar leaves.

Monitoring and Rapid Response

Monitor lake shores, stream banks and ditches, particular where water levels have dropped; plant is identifiable in summer when fruit or seed are present. Cutting flowering rush under water may reduce

population density, remove all plant parts; digging out isolated plants may prevent spread but bulbils on rhizomes must be removed also, do not compost near wetlands or water; control with herbicide difficult. Permits are usually required for herbicide use in water bodies and wetlands. For information see MDEQs Aquatic Nuisance Control website at: www.michigan.gov/deqinlandlakes.

Credits

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