

Invasive Species Highlight

Flowering Rush

Flowering rush (*Butomus umbellatus*) is native to Europe and Western Asia and was first discovered in North America in 1897. The species was unintentionally introduced into the Great Lakes through ballast water discharge and was commonly imported and sold by the water garden trade, leading to illegal release into the wild. Flowering rush was first confirmed in Minnesota in 1968 and is currently a prohibited species, meaning it is unlawful to possess, import, purchase, transport or introduce this species except under permit.

Environmental Impact

Flowering rush is a reed-like wetland plant with pink flowers that harms Minnesota waters by crowding shorelines, blocking lake access, and interfering with swimming and boating. It outcompetes native plants, reduces habitat for wildlife, and threatens plant diversity. Dense stands may displace important native vegetation.



Identification

- A perennial plant that grows 1'-4' high along shores in shallow, slow moving water. In deeper water, it can grow in a submerged form that does not produce flowers.
- Leaves are tall, extend from the roots, are dark green, and have a triangular cross-section and tend to twist near the tip.
- Flowers have 3 pink petals and 3 sepals arranged in an umbrella shape. Typically blooming in June through early fall, these small buds form in clusters of flowers and disperse and grow into new plants.
- Roots are bulb-like and appear to cup one another. The plant reproduces by vegetative spread from its rhizome in the form of small onion-like buds.

Look-alikes

Difficult to identify when not in flower and closely resembling many native species, identification is important. Native look-alikes include Hardstem bulrush, Common bulrush, Giant bur-reed, Sweet flag, and Lake sedge.



Clean all invasive species from boats, trailers, and other equipment.
Drain water from boats, ballast tanks, motors, and live wells before leaving.
Dry boats and equipment to ensure young mussels are not transported.

Visit our website for additional Invasive Species Highlights - winonaswcd.org

For any questions, call Abbi Hoffman - 507-523-2171 x113

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References and Resources

“Aquatic Invasive Species: Flowering Rush” *Minnesota Department of Natural Resources*. https://files.dnr.state.mn.us/eco/invasives/flowering_rush_factsheet.pdf

“*Butomus umbellatus* (Flowering Rush)” *Minnesota Wildflowers*. <https://www.minnesotawildflowers.info/flower/flowering-rush>

“Flowering rush (*Butomus umbellatus*)” *Department of Natural Resources*. <https://www.dnr.state.mn.us/invasives/terrestrialplants/herbaceous/floweringrush.html>

“Flowering Rush” Gupta, et al. *University of Minnesota Extension*. <https://extension.umn.edu/identify-invasive-species/flowering-rush>