

# Guide to Common Wetland Plants

Phragmites



Phragmites is an invasive reed that can grow to 12 feet tall. It is typically found along the shoreline in dense colonies. Because it grows in such thick stands, it crowds out native plants that have much more food value to local animals. Red-winged blackbirds value phragmites habitat for nesting sites.

Arrow Arum



Arrow arum, also known as tuckahoe, is an annual emergent plant that thrives in tidal fresh water. The plant's root system contains a large, potato-like tuber that was a valuable food source to local Indian tribes. Its leaves take the shape of an arrowhead, and it often grows alongside pickerelweed.

Pickerelweed



Pickerelweed is a native plant whose leaves look similar to those of arrow arum, with the main difference being that the leaf bottoms have rounded (rather than pointy) lobes. In the summer, the plant can be identified by its long purple flowers, which provide food and habitat for butterflies.

Cattails



Cattails grow in thick stands in marshes with low salinity levels. The plant once served as a valuable food source for both Indians and early colonists. The roots are edible and rich in starches, the young shoots can be eaten raw and taste like cucumbers, and the long leaves could be woven into mats.

Wild Rice



Wild rice is an annual grass that thrives in tidal freshwater and low salinity marshes. The seed heads reach peak ripeness in July - August and provide a rich source of food for dozens of species of birds. This native grass used to be harvested by Native Americans, who added the grains to salads.

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Big Cordgrass



Big cordgrass (*Spartina cynosuroides*) is a native grass that thrives along the shorelines of brackish water marshes. It can grow to a height of eight feet and the seed heads provide valuable food to many species of birds.

Smooth Cordgrass



Smooth cordgrass (*Spartina alterniflora*) is a native wetland grass that is found in moderate to high salinity wetland areas. The peak growth occurs from July through September, with rich seed heads providing food for birds.

Marsh Hibiscus



The marsh hibiscus is a native flower that can be white or pink. The flowers contain five petals and measure up to five inches across. Peak blooms occur from July through August. The root systems of this plant were once used to provide the flavoring for marshmallows.

Seashore Mallow



Seashore mallow is a native, pink flower that blooms along the shorelines of brackish water marshes from July through September. The flowers often appear in large stands, attracting many species of insects and butterflies.

Jewelweed



Jewelweed is common on the reaches of marshes in fresh, tidal waters. The flowers are bright orange, and the leaves can be used to treat a variety of skin rashes such as poison ivy.