

# Please call 1-866-invader if you suspect you have found this species

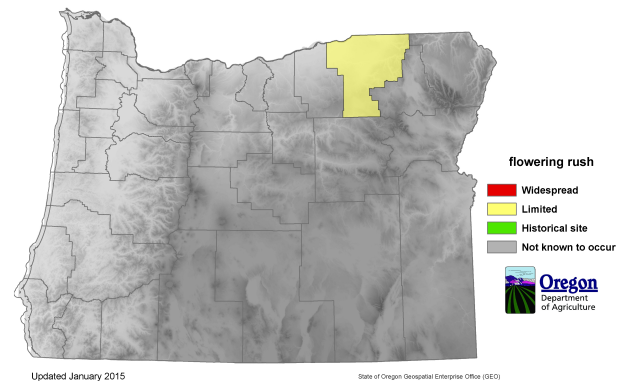
**Flowering rush**  
*Butomus umbellatus*

**Other common names:** grassy rush, water gladiolus

**USDA symbol:** BUUM  
**ODA rating:** A and T



**Introduction:** Flowering rush was first discovered in North America about 1879 along the St. Lawrence River. Since that time it has spread throughout the river system into the Great Lakes and sporadically across the Northern United States and Southern Canada. Its preferred habitat is lake shorelines and slow moving waters to a depth of around two meters. Flowering rush densities can be quite variable ranging from scattered clumps to populations exceeding 50% cover. It has been documented in Idaho, Washington State, Oregon and Montana though populations in Western North America are still limited.

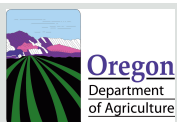


**Distribution in Oregon:** Currently there are 3 known sites of flowering rush located in Oregon near Boardman in the Columbia River.

**Description:** Flowering rush is a perennial water-loving plant in the Butomaceae family and not a true rush species. It is easy to identify when flowering, difficult when not. It's a tall plant growing 1.5 meters or more, triangular in cross-section and topped by an umbel of showy-white or pink flowers that emerge in late summer to early fall. The flowers consist of three petal-like sepals with no real petals present. Flowering rush can grow either as an emergent in meter deep water or in the lower marsh, acquiring two distinct growth forms depending on environment. The emergent form has stiff narrow leaves growing rigid and upright. Flowering rush reproduces both asexually by rhizomes and bulblets and sexually through seed production. There are two genetic forms in North America, the most dominant being diploid. Seed production only occurs in diploids with greatly increased bulblet production as well. Triploids reproduce entirely by bulblets and rhizomes. Moving water is the predominant dispersal mechanism as well as human activities and wildlife feeding.

**Impacts:** There is growing concern centering around the plants potential impact on wetlands in the Pacific Northwest. The plant has the potential to invade and disrupt native marshlands out-competing cattails and bullrushes. In the Northwest it is clear that the species is capable of forming vast monocultures in literal zones (shallow aquatic) as well as marshlands. Evidence of economic damage is now emerging in the western United States where unlined irrigation canals and drainage ditches are becoming clogged forcing the removal of plant material at a high cost. Additionally, public and private boat access is now being impeded at some locations in Idaho: the most seriously infested lakes having shorelines potentially rendered unfishable. At high risk are reservoirs with fluctuating water levels sporting large uncolonized literal zones.

**Biological controls:** Biological control agents are not used on "A" listed weeds in Oregon. If this weed is found in the state, it will be targeted for eradication or containment.



Oregon Department of Agriculture • Noxious Weed Control Program  
635 Capitol Street NE • Salem, OR 97301 • 503-986-4621  
[www.oregon.gov/ODA/programs/Weeds/Pages/Default.aspx](http://www.oregon.gov/ODA/programs/Weeds/Pages/Default.aspx)

Photos by Leslie Mehrhoff,  
Bugwood.org