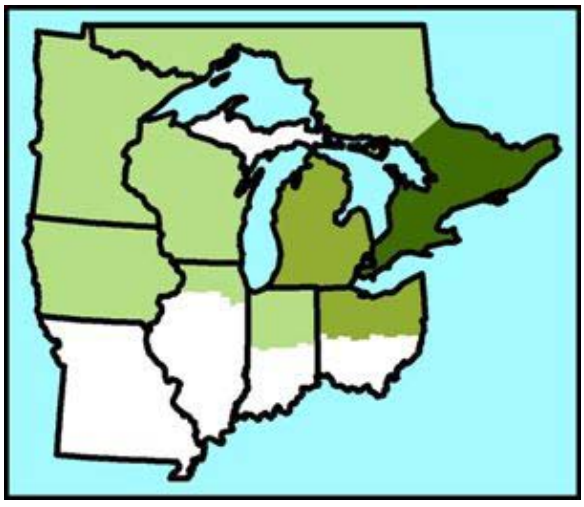
New Invasive Plants of the Midwest Fact Sheet

FLOWERING RUSH
Butomus umbellatus

Description: Flowering rush is a perennial, emergent aquatic herb. Emergent leaves are 3 feet tall, stiff, narrow and triangular in cross-section. Flowers have 3 petals and 3 sepals, are white or pink, and form a distinctive flat-topped spray atop a tall stalk. They bloom late summer through early fall and prefer shallow or slow-moving water.

Native range: Eurasia (www.cws-scf.ec.gc.ca/publications/inv/p3_e.cfm)



Ecological threat: This plant threatens marshes, backwaters and shorelines. Once in a watershed it spreads locally by rhizomes and root pieces that break off and form new plants, and by water and ice movements carrying it to new areas of the water body.

Current North American Range: Flowering rush is currently observed throughout Minnesota, Iowa, Wisconsin, mainland Michigan, and southern Ontario. It is also seen in northern Illinois, Indiana, and Ohio.

Current Midwest general distribution, including southern Ontario — Not Known | Isolated | Locally Abundant | Widespread

Early Detection and Rapid Response Can Help Stop the Spread!

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FLOWERING RUSH, *Butomus umbellatus*

MANAGEMENT OPTIONS: (http://www.seagrant.umn.edu/ais/floweringrush)

Flowering rush is very difficult to identify, especially if it is not in flower. It closely resembles many native emergent plants, such as the common bulrush.

Exotics often move into disturbed areas. Removing native plants may open areas for flowering rush to invade. Protecting native plants is an important way to help keep flowering rush out of your shoreline.

Improper control methods can worsen the flowering rush problem. See below for more information.

Mechanical methods

Cutting flowering rush below the water surface is an effective method of control. Cutting will not kill the plant, but it will decrease the abundance. Multiple cuts may be required throughout the summer as flowering rush grows back from the root. All cut plant parts must be removed from the water.

Hand digging can be used to remove isolated plants that are located downstream of larger infestations. Extreme care must be taken to remove all root fragments. Any disturbance to the root system will cause small reproductive structures on the roots to break off and spread to other areas of the waterbody. Therefore, methods such as raking or pulling which disturb the root system, but do not remove it, are not recommended control strategies.

Chemical methods

It is very difficult to kill flowering rush with herbicides. Herbicides easily wash away from the narrow leaves of this plant. Herbicides are more effective on dry banks or in very shallow water. There is no herbicide that is selective for flowering rush and care must be taken to avoid damage to valuble wetland plants such as cattails.

For more information on control and management of this species, please visit the following Web sites: www.usda.plants.gov, www.nps.gov/plants/alien/factmain.htm, tncweeds.ucdavis.edu/comtrol.html, dnr.wi.gov/invasives/plants.htm, www.invasivespeciesinfo.gov/plants/main.shtml, http://www.nps.gov/plants/alien/fact/pope1.htm

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