



NARROW-LEAVED BUR-REED

SPARGANIUM ANGUSTIFOLIUM



Narrow-leaved bur-reed is a perennial native aquatic plant producing a floating stem with long, narrow, flattened leaves which can be quite long, sometimes reaching over two meters producing a floating stem with long, narrow, flattened leaves which can be quite long, sometimes reaching over two meters. It can become abundant, practically covering the surface of the water.

Habitat Preference

Found in freshwater ponds, and lakes, as well as in slow-moving rivers and streams

CHARACTERISTICS:

Vegetative

- Leaf type: blade.
- Leaf shape: linear leaf blade.
- Leaf arrangement: one leaf per node along the stem.
- Leaf position: basal.

Flower

- Number of petals/sepals: round flower heads with spike like arrangement.
- Color: green to brown / white.
- Attachment: Two types of distinct, spiky fruits -
 - Drupe: fleshy with a firm inner ovary wall that encloses a single seed.
 - Achene: dry, usually 1-seeded and does not separate or split at maturity.
- Fruit color: dry to reddish-brown.

Seed

- Embedded inside the flower, burr-like.





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Cultural History Notes

- Indigenous people from the Klamath tribe dig narrow-leaved bur-reed and other Sparganium species in the late fall to eat the tubers.

Ecological Contributions to Lake Champlain

Biological

- Fruits are a source of food for waterfowl.

Chemical

- Prefer oligotrophic (low-nutrient) waters and can be an indicator of these conditions.

Physical

- Provide cover for fish larvae such as Northern Pike.

Similar Species

Floating bur-reed (*Sparganium fluctuans*)

- Native aquatic plant with no known populations in Lake Champlain, but present in the Lake Champlain basin.
- Found in quiet sections of lakes and ponds and slow-moving rivers, at depths of 4+ feet.



FLOATING BUR-REED



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How to differentiate narrow-leaved bur-reed and floating bur-reed

- As the name suggests, narrow-leaved bur-reed has narrower leaves: they don't get wider than 6 centimeters, while floating bur-reed leaves are 7-10 millimeters.
- Floating bur-reed has branched flower clusters, and fruit is distinctly red with strongly curved beaks.

Scan to learn more about Lake Champlain's native aquatic plants!



The Lake Champlain Committee is a watershed-based nonprofit that uses science-based advocacy, education, and collaborative action to protect and restore water quality, safeguard natural habitats and ensure recreational access in the Lake Champlain Basin.



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