



FLOWERING RUSH

Butomus umbellatus

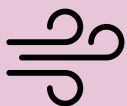
Identification/Origin

Flowering rush is a perennial aquatic plant native to Africa, Asia, and Eurasia. It was introduced to North America from Europe for ornamental purposes and from ship ballast discharge. It can grow both fully submerged and emergent, with triangular leaves that may have twists. It has thick, creeping rhizomes and a large cluster of pink to white flowers (rarely flowers in Montana). In Montana, flowering rush is a non-fertile type and does not reproduce from seed but instead relies on vegetative blubils on the rhizomes or by fragmentation of the rhizome.

Level of Infestation in Montana

Flowering Rush was first collected in Montana along the north margin of Flathead Lake in 1962. It now occurs in Sanders, Lake, and Flathead Counties, and in Flathead Lake, upper and lower Flathead Rivers, Clark Fork River into Lake Pend Oreille (Idaho), Thompson Falls Reservoir, Noxon Reservoir, and Cabinet Gorge Reservoir. A conservation status rank is not applicable (SNA) because exotic plants are not a suitable target for conservation activities.

Pathways



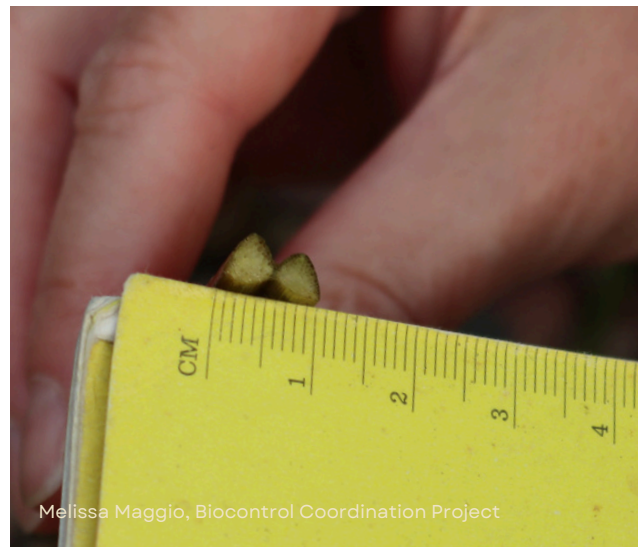
Passive spread
(wind/water)



Recreational
watercraft



Nursery



Melissa Maggio, Biocontrol Coordination Project



Jennifer Anderson, Washington State University, Bugwood.org



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Reporting

To report Flowering Rush, contact the AIS staff at Fish, Wildlife & Parks or online at <https://fwp.mt.gov/conservation/aquatic-invasive-species/report-an-ais>

Impacts

Flowering rush can displace native riparian vegetation and can be an obstacle to boat traffic. Dense stands of flowering rush impede recreation, obstruct irrigation, and alter native habitat. Control of this species is very difficult. Herbicides are unable to move into the rhizome and the rhizome can retain enough energy to recover the plant post treatment. Extensive physical methods of control must be employed to manage this invasive exotic.

Regional Ramifications

Flowering rush sporadically flowers in Montana which makes it difficult to identify as it can be confused for cattails, irises, or sedges. It grows in thick mats that fill irrigation ditches and clog boating and swimming areas. It also creates habitat for northern pike, which consume native species like westslope cutthroat and bull trout. The plant also provides habitat for various snail species which hosts the parasite that causes swimmer's itch.

More Information

More information about flowering rush can be found on the Montana State University Extension website or on the Montana Field Guide website.

