

River Bulrush

Scirpus fluviatilis

-River Bulrush is invaluable when it comes to preventing soil erosion from entering a water body. The stems of River Bulrush are sharply triangular and emerge from a robust, tuber-producing rhizome. The stems have prominent, three-ranked leaves that are “M” shaped in cross-section. It grows well on shores, marshes, and in water up to 3 feet deep.

-Spikelets are produced on the end of the stem just above several floral leaves. Some of the spikelets are on stalks and others emerge directly from the stem tip. Each spikelet has a spiral of flowers covered by brown scales. Nutlets are three-angled with a prominent beak and six barbed bristles.

-River Bulrush is part of the sedge family (*Cyperaceae*). It can be separated from grasses and rushes by looking at the spikelets, which have a spiral arrangement of scale-covered flowers and nutlets. It can be separated from other bulrushes in our region by the stout, triangular leafy stem.

-When you grasp the stem of a River Bulrush, you’ll see why it has been used to build furniture and shelters. The stems are thick and sturdy. They are also tall, straight, and decay resistant.

-River Bulrush is an excellent shoreline stabilizer. The rhizome network is dense and strong. The rhizomes of River Bulrush produce high-nutrient tubers that are an important food source for geese, particularly during migration. Nutlets are eaten by a variety of waterfowl, including black duck, canvasback, gadwall, mallard, pintail, and redhead.

