

# Soft-stem Bulrush

*Scirpus validus*

-Soft-stem Bulrush has tall, flexible stems that emerge from a shallow rhizome. The cylindrical, bluish-green stems are spongy when pressed between your fingers. This is due to the large air chambers that fill the stem. The stems emerge from a slender, buried rhizome and appear to be leafless. However, leaf sheaths are present near the base of each stem. There is also a floral leaf called a bract that looks like a continuation of the tip of the stem. The spikelets emerge in the angle of this bract and the end of the stem. Soft-stem Bulrush can grow in water up to 6 ½ feet deep.

-The oval spikelets, which are about twice as long as wide, are single or clustered on the ends of lax stalks. The scale-covered flowers are spirally arranged. The scales are shiny, reddish-brown, and often have a green midrib. There may be a few red flecks restricted to the midrib area. The nutlets develop underneath the scales.

-Soft-stem Bulrush offers habitat for invertebrates and shelter for young fish. The nutlets are consumed by a wide variety of waterfowl, marsh birds, and upland birds. Geese and other animals eat stems and rhizomes. Bulrushes also provide nesting material and cover for a wide variety of wildlife.



**There are some who can live without wild things, and some who cannot.**

**-Aldo Leopold**