

BULRUSH
Scirpus spp.

Annual or perennial sedges with leafy stems or leaves present only as sheaths at the base of the stem; all stems sheathed at base. In many species the stem is triangular or 3-sided in cross-section. Flowers on spikelets which are often cone-shaped or flattened, occurring alone or in clusters; may be at end of stem or originate along the side of the stem. In many species there are one or more leaves originating from the junction of the spikelets.

There are approximately 40 species found in the United States. They range in size from 0.2 to 2 meters high.

The nut-like flowers and seeds from this genus are one of the most important food sources for waterfowl and marsh birds; stems and roots are eaten by muskrats, swans, geese and shorebirds; vegetation provides nesting cover for waterfowl, marsh wrens and blackbirds and cover for small mammals; bluegill and largemouth bass nest within emergent stands; may serve as food and cover, especially for young fish; supports insects which are important food items for fish.