

# SALT MARSH BULRUSH

## *Bolboschoenus robustus*

**Habitat:** Bulrush is found in coastal salt marshes and tidal flats ranging from Nova Scotia to Florida, the Gulf of Mexico, and also California.

**Characteristics:** Bulrush is green in color with one to five spikelet's that are clustered together near the top of the stem (see photo to right). The spikelet's are reddish-brown in color containing brown seeds within them. This plant can grow between 2.3 to 5 feet tall. It flowers April to August and fruits from July to October.

**Role in the Marsh:** Bulrush plays an important part in salt marsh ecology and diversity. Their seeds are a primary food source for muskrats, a variety of marsh birds, and waterfowl. It also provides habitat and shelter for ducks and fiddler crabs.



**Common Names:** Names of plants can vary among regions. Bulrush is one plant that has many names, nine to be exact! Those names include seacoast bulrush, alkali bulrush, bulrush, three-cornered rush, leafy three-cornered sedge, saltmarsh bulrush, seaside club-rush, stout bulrush, and sturdy bulrush.

**Scientific vs Common Name:** Even though this plant has many names they all refer to the same one. Scientists however, know it by using their genus and species (scientific name) which is understood universally. The use of the genus and species derives from a formal naming system called binomial nomenclature (naming the species of living things using two parts). The naming of this particular plant is *Bolboschoenus robustus*.

### **Native Americans and Bulrush:**

Not only does bulrush provide food and shelter for many plants and animals, it also was a food source for Native Americans. They would eat the tubers and shoots while also using the stems to make baskets, mats, and other materials.

#### References:

Inaturalist.org, Seacoast Bulrush-  
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Lumcon  
8124 Hwy 56, Chauvin, LA 70344  
[www.lumcon.edu](http://www.lumcon.edu)

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