

Flowering Rush  
*Butomus umbellatus*

Currently in Montana, noxious weed infest about 7.6 million acres (Montana's Noxious Weeds, MSU pub. 2010, pg. 6). Many of these state listed noxious weeds were brought to America as ornamentals for gardens, medicinal purposes, by accident in discarded soil from a ship's ballast or unintentionally in bags of seed brought from other parts of the world. Whatever the cause of introduction, 32 non-native plant species have found their way onto Montana's state noxious weed list.

Flowering Rush (*Butomus umbellatus*) is a priority 1B listed noxious weed in the state of Montana. Priority 1B species are noxious weeds that have limited presence within the state of Montana. Management for these species includes eradication or containment and education. Species listed as Priority 1B noxious weeds are: dyer's woad, flowering rush, Japanese knotweed complex, purple loosestrife, rush skeletonweed, Eurasian watermilfoil, scotch broom and curlyleaf pondweed.

Flowering rush is native to Eurasia and was introduced into the United States as an ornamental because of its showy umbel flowers. Flowering rush escaped cultivation and is now considered an invasive plant and listed on many state noxious weed lists a crossed the county and in numerous Canadian providences. Habitats where this plant flourishes include areas where the soil is wet and gets full sun. It can be found in riparian areas and wetlands and includes ditches, marshes, lakes and streams.

This plant is an aquatic perennial that can grow to height of up to 5' tall. The stem of this plant is 3-sides and if a cross section is looked at, the stem looks like a triangle. The leaves of this plant are also triangular, sword-like, and can be up to 3' long. Often times, the ends of the leaves become twisted and spiral.

Flowering rush produces flowers from June to August. Flowers are borne on the ends of the stems on cylindrical stalks in a round-topped umbrella like cluster. There can be as many as 50 flowers produced per stalk. The flowers consist of 3 pink petals and 3 pink sepals that resemble petals. Upon pollination this plant produces seeds however; it is very rare for this plant to be spread by seeds because seed production is very minimal. When seeds are produced they are dark brown in color and are produced in fruits that are ½" long.

The primary way that this plant reproduces is through creeping rhizomatous roots and 'bulb-lets' that are produced on the rhizomes.

Flowering rush is currently only found in Flathead, Lake, Missoula and Sanders counties. This plant can be confused with common bulrush and is difficult to decipher the differences between the two plants unless one is in the flowering stage.

Flowering rush is best controlled by the use of herbicides. If you suspect you've found an infestation of flowering rush, contact your county weed coordinator right away so that a treatment regimen can begin to prevent further spread of this invasive plant.

Please take a few moments to learn about flowering rush and the other state listed noxious weeds. If noxious weeds are not currently a problem in your area, they may be in the near future. For more information about Montana's state listed noxious weeds, regulated plants, or weed species listed on your county weed list, please contact your local county weed district (can list weed district name here... ex: Lewis & Clark County Weed District) at (406) (Phone number). Or you can contact the Montana Department of Agriculture at (406) 444-3144.