



# Invasive Plant Alert<sup>1</sup>

## Bog Bulrush

*Schoenoplectus mucronatus* (L.)  
Palla

Also known as ricefield or ricemarsh bulrush, *Schoenoplectus mucronatus* is a threat in wetland areas in the west and a potential threat in the east. It grows as a freshwater emergent in disturbed wet areas.



Figure 1 *Schoenoplectus mucronatus*.  
Credit: David Werier, NYNHP

### Where to Look

This perennial sedge grows in and near freshwater ponds, ditches, and wetlands. It prefers disturbed areas and may act as an annual in rice fields.

This species is native to tropical regions of Africa, temperate and tropical Asia, and mid to southern Europe. It was first documented in the US in California in 1942, and was historically cultivated in Washington State for wildlife forage. It is a serious invader of rice fields in California. In the east documented occurrences includes Illinois, Kentucky, New Jersey,

New York, Pennsylvania, and Tennessee. In 2009 it was found in Virginia at a wetland site.



Figure 2 Inflorescence. Andrea Moro - Monaco di Baviera, Orto Botanico di Monaco-Nimphenburg, Monaco, Baviera, Germania

### Identifying the Plant

Bog Bulrush has triangular stems that are 2 – 3 mm wide and 60-90 cm tall at maturity. Leaves are reduced to bladeless sheaths that lack ligules.

Flowers are terminal with 4 – 20 clustered spiklets approximately 7 – 12 mm long and 4 mm wide. Rust or straw-colored scales cover spiklets and are entire and sword-shaped. The scale tips are obtuse to broadly acute. A distinctive angled bract extends from the base of the flowerhead at nearly a right angle. Fruits may be present from June-October and are flattened, black and have hair-like projections from the base when mature.

This species resembles several native bulrushes, but can be distinguished by the single right-angled bract and hair-like projections on mature seed. Bog Bulrush also flowers later than

native look-a-likes, approximately 60 – 70 days after flooding.

### How to get rid of it?

Bog Bulrush reproduces both vegetatively and by seed. Seeds can be spread by waterfowl. The dual reproductive methods, coupled with the plant's resistance to herbicides, makes control difficult. Hand pulling is an effective but time consuming method of removal. Remove as much of the root system as possible. Water level manipulation to exposes tubers restricts sprouting of new plants. However, tubers can remain dormant for an extended period. Water management should be long enough to completely dry out this plant.

Bog Bulrush is resistant to ALS-inhibiting herbicides. However, foliar application of glyphosate in combination with water level draw-down can be successful.

### Resources

New York Invasive Species Clearinghouse. Cornell University Coop. Ext. (2012). [http://www.nyis.info/index.php?action=liisma\\_pages&page=species\\_alerts](http://www.nyis.info/index.php?action=liisma_pages&page=species_alerts)

Washington State Noxious Weed Control Board. (2007). <http://your.kingcounty.gov/dnrp/library/water-and-land/weeds/Brochures/schoenoplectus-mucronatus.pdf>

<sup>1</sup> This species has been identified as a potential or emerging threat to natural areas in the mid-Atlantic region