

STURDY BULRUSH

Schoenoplectus robustus

(Pursh) M.T. Strong

Plant Symbol = SCRO5

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Vic Ramey

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Alternative Names

bulrush, alkali bulrush, three cornered rush, leafy three-cornered sedge, stout bulrush

Uses

Wildlife: Sturdy bulrush seeds are an important food source to muskrat, waterfowl, ducks, geese, and other water birds. This species also provide cover for nesting birds.

Status

Please consult the PLANTS Web site and your State Department of Natural Resources for this plant's

current status, such as, state noxious status, and wetland indicator values.

Description

General: Sedge family (Cyperaceae). Sturdy bulrush is native, perennial sedge that grows up to three and a half feet tall. The leaves are grasslike, long and narrow, up to twenty-four inches long. The flowers are born in three or more spikelets that are covered by brown scales (Tiner 1987), flowering between April and August. The fruit is a dark brown or black achene with pits that fruit between July and October.

Distribution: Sturdy bulrush grows from Maine, south to Florida and west to Texas. For current distribution, please consult the Plant profile page for this species on the PLANTS Web site.

Adaptation

Sturdy bulrush occurs in swampy meadows, along streams, swamps, sloughs, and borders of oxbow lakes in river flood plains. This is a wetland species that grows best in *Schoenoplectus* communities with water levels between -6 and +5 inches with a soil pH ranging from 4.3 to 6.4.

Establishment

Propagation by Seed: Sturdy bulrush seeds should be sown in a cold frame as soon as they are ripe in a pot standing in three centimeters of water. The seeds germinate quickly. When they are large enough to handle, out-plant into their permanent positions in early summer.

Large divisions can be planted directly into their permanent positions. It is best to pot smaller divisions and grow them in a cold frame and out-planting when they are well established in the summer.

Management

After seed planting, water level over sturdy bulrush seeds should be maintained at one foot for two weeks. Periodic flooding up to three feet should occur until the seedlings are established.

Cultivars, Improved and Selected Materials (and area of origin)

Available through commercial nurseries dealing with wetland plants. Contact your local Natural Resources Conservation Service (formerly Soil Conservation Service) office for more information. Look in the

Plant Materials <<http://plant-materials.nrcs.usda.gov/>>

Plant Fact Sheet/Guide Coordination Page <<http://plant-materials.nrcs.usda.gov/intranet/pfs.html>>

National Plant Data Center <<http://npdc.usda.gov>>

phone book under "United States Government." The Natural Resources Conservation Service will be listed under the subheading "Department of Agriculture."

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For more information about this and other plants, please contact your local NRCS field office or Conservation District, and visit the PLANTS Web site <<http://plants.usda.gov>> or the Plant Materials Program Web site <<http://Plant-Materials.nrcs.usda.gov>>

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