

Acoraceae

sweetflag family

A family of perennial wetland herbs containing aromatic oils, especially noticeable when the plants are bruised. Plants creep on horizontal rhizomes just below the soil's surface. Leaves are not differentiated into blades and petioles, swordlike. The inflorescence is a spadix borne terminally on an angled peduncle. It is subtended by a leaf extending beyond it; the spathe is absent. The spadix is nearly cylindrical, tapering to the obtuse apex. The flowers are bisexual; tepals and stamens number six. The stamens are distinct; ovaries and stigmas are sessile (styles essentially absent), minute and the ovaries 1–3. Fruits are thin leathery capsules with 1–6 seeds.

***Acorus* L.**

Sweetflag

The plants are described above. The fruit is a dry indehiscent capsule with 1–3 seeds. The rhizomes are particularly aromatic when crushed.

Key to species

A single midvein prominently raised above leaf surface, other veins barely or not raised; mature fruits absent. *Acorus calamus*

Veins >1 equally raised above leaf surface; mature fruits present. *A. americanus*

***Acorus americanus* Raf.**

Sweetflag; belle-angélique; acore d'Amérique



Photo by David Mazerolle

Slightly shorter than cattails, it may reach only 80cm in height. The leaves are less than 1cm wide. Spadix 4–6cm long and completely covered with tiny flowers. Perianth consists of six lobes and six stamens.

Flowers and fruits produced from May to August.

Marshes, pond edges and meadows, often near the coast. Commonly emergent.

Scattered across the province, especially in the northern areas.



Photo by Sean Blaney

Ranges from NF to AK, south to MT and VA.

***Acorus calamus* L.**

Calamus; acore roseau

A sterile plant it is easily distinguished on the basis of leaf venation. This species has a single raised midvein. It is similar to the native species in height and appearance otherwise. Spadix is present, but flowers do not produce fruit.

Flowers in early summer.

Marshes, meadows and lacustrine shallows.

Scattered localities from Yarmouth to Cape Breton.

Ranges from NS to MB, south to TX and GA; west coast. Introduced to Canada.