

Ruppiaceae

ditchgrass family

Ditchgrasses are aquatic species, rooting in mud in fresh or brackish waters. Their perfect flowers are borne on long tenuous and coiled peduncles from the axils of upper leaves. Arranged in short spikes, each flower is initially concealed within a spathe. Stamens are two. Leaves are alternate or opposite, each with a single midrib.

***Ruppia* L.**

As described above. There are 10 species in this worldwide genus; one is found in Nova Scotia.

***Ruppia maritima* L.**

Ditchgrass



Photo by Alex Wilson

A very slender and submerged plant, rooting from the proximal nodes. Freely branching, each bears leaves scarcely 0.5mm wide. The stipules sheath the base of the leaves for approximately 1cm. The peduncles arise from the sheath, bearing the spikes. Fruits are ovoid and beaked or strongly compressed. A variable species, all previously named varieties are included here.

Flowers and fruits from July through October.

Frequents saline or brackish pools and marshes, standing water in ditches.

Common around the entire coast.

Ranges from NF to SK, south along the Atlantic and Gulf coasts; west coast from AK to CA.