

## Typhaceae

### cat-tail family

A monogeneric family, there are about 10 species of wetland perennials included. Height ranges from 1–2m, the erect stems terminating in a thick cylindric spike. Each pistillate flower is minute, forming seeds that disperse amidst a tangle of cottony fibre. Staminate flowers form a narrower spike above, soon becoming deciduous.

### *Typha* L.

#### cat-tails

Flowers as described above. The leaves are very long and narrow, somewhat flat and thickened towards the centre.

Key to species

Leaves flat to 2.4cm wide; staminate and pistillate spikes close together, if not touching.

*Typha latifolia*

Leaves planoconvex, less than 7mm wide; staminate and pistillate spike gap 1–8cm.

*T. angustifolium*

### *Typha angustifolium* L.

#### Narrow-leaved Cat-tail; quenouille à feuilles étroites

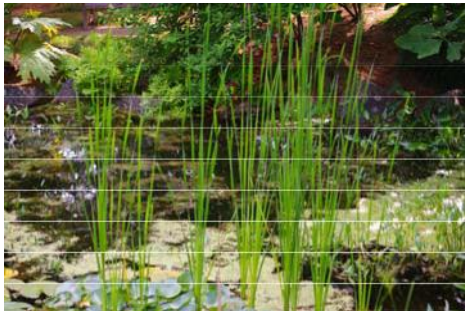


Photo by Martin Thomas

The long narrow leaves are scarcely 7mm wide, usually rounded on the lower surface and exceeding the spikes. Leaf sheaths are auriculate. Staminate and pistillate spikes are separated by at least 5mm and sometimes as much as 12cm apart. Staminate spikes are dark brown at anthesis. Pistillate spikes reach up to 2cm thick. During the growing season the plant appears to be darkly glaucous.

Flowers produced from May through July.



Photo by Alain Belliveau

Found in brackish swales near the coast, swamps, marshes, ditches and streamsides.

Scattered and local and appears to be absent from southwestern counties.

Ranges from NS to BC, largely south to CA, NM, MS and SC; Eurasia.

### ***Typha latifolia* L.**

#### **Broad-leaved Cat-tail; quenouille à feuilles larges**



Photo by Sean Blaney

The leaves are wider than in the previous species, sometimes exceeding 2cm. Pistillate spikes may have a diameter of 1–3cm. The leaf sheaths taper into the blades, which may be equal in height to the spikes or taller. Staminate and pistillate spikes are usually touching. At anthesis the staminate flowers are green and the pistillate spike exceeding 3cm in diameter.

A dominant species in freshwater marshes, found in swamps, ditches and estuarine conditions.

Common throughout but for the Cape Breton highlands.

Ranges from NF to AK, south to Mexico; Eurasia and Africa. Absent only from Labrador and NU.

Forms hybrids with our other species, named *T. X glauca*



*Photo by Alain Belliveau*

Godr. The leaf width ranges from 6–15mm and the spike gaps are 0.5–4cm, making the intermediate between the two parents. This is known to be more invasive than its parents, though it may make few seeds. It is local at Dartmouth Crossing, Halifax Co.