

Zosteraceae

eelgrass family

Only three genera comprise this family, with a single species included in Nova Scotia's flora. Plants are aquatic, their leaves completely submerged or with the uppermost ones floating. The stems are jointed, sheathed by the leaf bases. Flowers are unisexual, each type with a single pistil or stamen. They are borne on a spadix, hidden within a spathe. Fruits are drupelike.

Zostera L.

Eelgrass

Grassy in appearance and in our province, it is our only truly marine vascular species. The genus is cosmopolitan and includes 10 species.

Zostera marina L.

Eelgrass; zostère marine



Photo by Ross Hall

Long leaves reaching 50cm in length are sessile along a slender stem. Leaves are marked by 3–5 strong veins and several faint ones visible on the lower surface. Flowers are much reduced and seldom seen.

Frequents saline lakes and coastal marine waters. Forms an important component of beach wrack.

Frequent around the coast.

Ranges from Greenland to NU, south to MB and along the coast to NC; AK to CA; Eurasia.



Photo by Roger Lloyd