

Sparganiaceae

bur-reed family

The family comprises a monogeneric group of aquatic perennials, totalling 15–20 species of the north-temperate zones. Leaves are long and narrow and may be basal or cauline. Submerged and emerged leaves both have septa. Easily distinguished, they produce a flexuous and sometimes branched inflorescence of persistent burrs; flowers are imperfect. Inflorescence arises from the axil of the bracteal leaf or above, the staminate heads distalmost. Perianth is reduced to 3–6 tepallike scales. Fruits are achenes within a hard bony covering, one seed per locule.

Sparganium L.

bur-reeds

Floating or erect, all are aquatic or emergent, with long ribbonlike leaves.

Key to species

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|---|------------------------------|
| A. Stigmas 2; fruit more than 4mm thick, flattened across the top. | <i>Sparganium eurycarpum</i> |
| aa. Stigma 1; fruit 1.2–3mm thick, ovate or elliptic. | B |
| B. Beak of the fruit long and slender. | C |
| C. Beak of the fruit, long and curved. | <i>S. fluctuans</i> |
| cc. Beak straight or nearly so. | D |
| D. Pistillate heads borne directly in the bract axils. | <i>S. americanum</i> |
| dd. Pistillate heads born above the axil. | E |
| E. Plant erect or ascending; leaves flat, 5–10mm wide. | <i>S. emersum</i> |
| ee. Plant usually floating or stranded; leaves rounded on the back, 1.5-4mm wide. | <i>S. angustifolium</i> |
| bb. Beak of the fruit short or beak absent. | F |
| F. Pistillate heads borne directly in the bract axil. | <i>S. natans</i> |
| ff. Pistillate heads borne slightly above the bract axil. | <i>S. hyperboreum</i> |

***Sparganium americanum* Nutt.**
rubanier d'Amérique



Photo by Sean Blaney



Photo by Alain Belliveau

A stout emergent plant, the stem bears a branching inflorescence, with 2–3 pistillate heads on each branch. These or their pedicels arise directly from the axils of the bracteal leaves. Each achene tapers distally, ending in a long slender beak.

Grows in muddy substrates along sluggish streams or lakeshores.

Common throughout, but most abundant in the southwestern counties where large colonies are found around shallow lakes.

Ranges from NF to MB, south to FL and TX.

***Sparganium angustifolium* Michx.**
rubanier à feuilles étroites



Photo by Sean Blaney

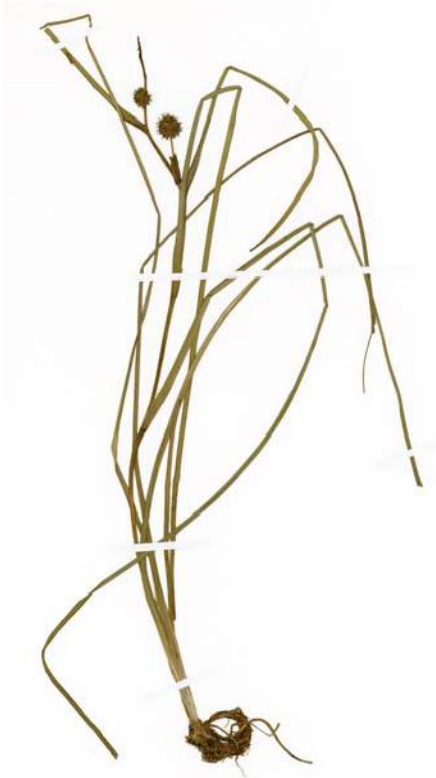


Photo by Roger Lloyd

A long floating plant, with long narrow leaves, 1.5–4mm wide, broader at the base and rounded on the back. Pistillate heads are often exerted above the axils. Achenes are short beaked.

Limited to sandy substrates of ponds, shallow lakes and freshwater marshes.

Common throughout, especially along the Atlantic coast. Scattered elsewhere.

Ranges from NF to AK, south to CA and NM in the west and IL and VA in the east. Absent from the plains area.

***Sparganium emersum* Rehmann**
rubanier à fruits verts



Photo by Martin Thomas

Smaller even than the previous species, its erect leaves far exceed the height of the fruiting branches, which may be scarcely above the base of the plant. Leaves are usually closer to 5mm wide.

Usually in wet mucky soils and shallow waters of brackish ponds, lakes, bog pools, etc.

Common throughout.

Ranges from NF to AK, south to CA, NM and NC.



Photo by Roger Lloyd

***Sparganium eurycarpum* Engelm.**
Giant Bur-reed; rubanier à gros
fruits



Photo by Martin Thomas

The largest of our *Sparganium* species, its culms may reach more than 1m in length. There are two stigmas and the fruit is abruptly truncated at the top.

Fertile swamps as at the edges of sinkholes and pools behind coastal beaches.

Found from Halifax and Cumberland Co. and in Inverness Co. locations. Absent from the southwest and in eastern Cape Breton.

Ranges from NF to NT, south to CA, NM, OK and VA.



Photo by Martin Thomas

***Sparganium fluctuans* (Morong) BL. Robins**
rubanier flottant



Photo by Martin Thomas

The leaves are thin and translucent and all floating. The achenes have long curved beaks. Noticeable is the presence of papery sepals basally attached to the short stipe of the achene.



Photo by Roger Lloyd

Limited to the colder waters of lakes and ponds in siliceous areas.

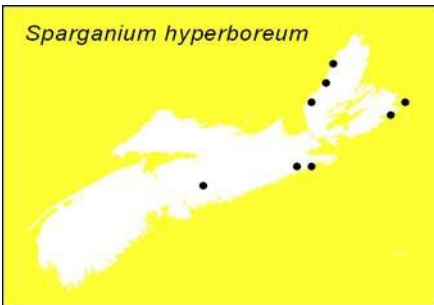
Scattered to uncommon in NS.

Elsewhere from NF to BC south to ID and NJ.

***Sparganium hyperboreum* Laestad.**
rubanier hyperboréal



Photo by Roger Lloyd



Our smallest species, its leaves are scarcely 4mm wide. Pistillate flowers are borne above the bracteate leaf axil. Beak length is hard to determine in flower. At maturity, no beak remains on the yellowish achenes.

Peaty pools.

Rare in Cape Breton. On the mainland, collected from Drumhead and New Harbour, Guysborough Co.

Elsewhere from NF to AK; NS. Arctic and boreal.

***Sparganium natans* L.**
rubanier nageant



Photo by Roger Lloyd

A small species with thin floating leaves, it is easily overlooked. The achenes have short stubby beaks, a key feature. Pistillate flower heads all arise from the bracteal leaf axils.

Found in shallows of pools, pond edges and alkaline sink holes.

Widely scattered and infrequently reported from Digby to eastern Cape Breton.

Ranges from NF to AK, south to CA, IL and NJ; absent from the southern plains; Eurasia.