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# NORTHERN WILD RICE

*Zizania palustris*

## Habitat Preference

*Brackish* (5) marshes and flats, fresh tidal marshes, in lakes or ponds, rivers or streams and along the shores of rivers or lakes.

## Characteristics

### **Vegetative**

Leaves flat, hairless, and rough-textured around the edge. Leaf blades strap-like (three to four feet long) arranged alternately with *basal* (2) attachment.

### **Flower**

Two pairs of *bracts* (6), straw colored to purple. Attached to branches rather than to the main axis.

### **Fruit**

Narrowly oblong seeds that turn dark brown at maturity (rice "grains"). Commonly aborted when past maturity.

## Ecological Contributions to Lake Champlain

- Valued food source and nesting habitat for waterfowl.
- Rich source of *riboflavin* (19) and *niacin* (11), making it a nutritious food for wildlife and humans alike.
- Tends to grow further away from the shore than other aquatic grasses, in depths of up to five feet, providing habitat for small fish and microorganisms.

