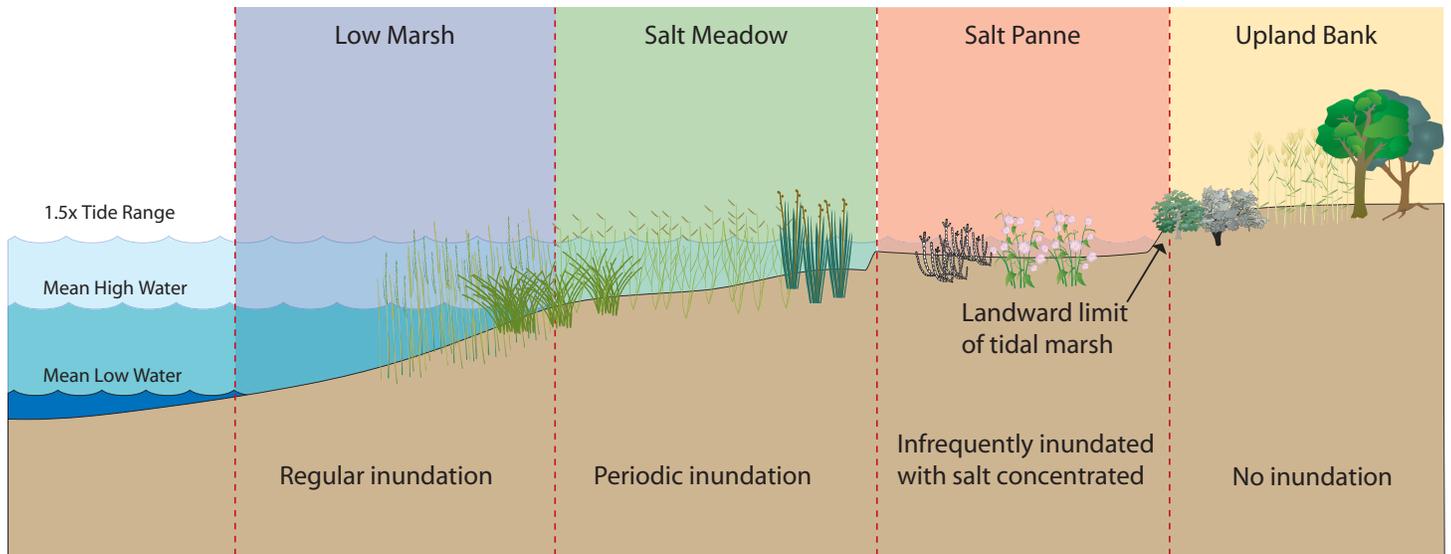


Field Guide to Virginia Salt and Brackish Marsh Plants



Plant depictions courtesy of IAN symbol library

Marsh Zone Key

- Low Marsh
- Salt Meadow
- Salt Panne
- Upland Bank

Annotated drawing

Plant photo

Scientific name → *Phragmites australis* (Phragmites or Reed Grass)

↑ 6-14 ft

Plant height

← Common name

September - October

Blooming period

This basic field guide illustrates the most common plants in Virginia's tidal salt marshes where the salinity range is between 10-25 ppt. Salt marsh vegetation is divided into zones based on the extent of tidal inundation. Each plant's location in the marsh is indicated by the color that matches the zonation depicted in the cross-section. The most recognizable feature of each plant is also featured with illustrations and photographs.



Spartina alterniflora (Smooth Cordgrass)

↑ 1-8 ft

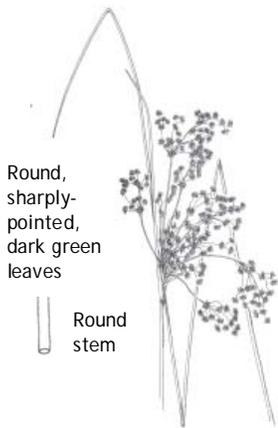
✿ August - October



Spartina cynosuroides (Big Cordgrass)

↑ up to 10 ft

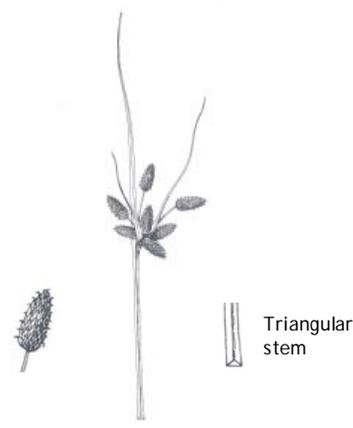
✿ July - September



Juncus roemerianus (Black Needle Rush)

↑ up to 3 ft.

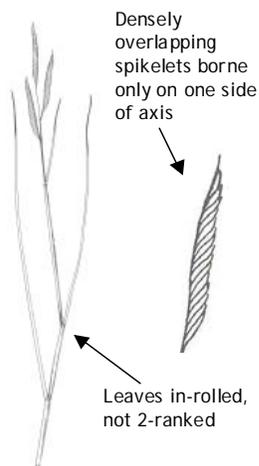
✿ April - October



Scirpus robustus (Salt Marsh Bulrush)

↑ 2-3 ft

✿ July - October



Spartina patens (Salt Meadow Hay)

↑ 1-3 ft

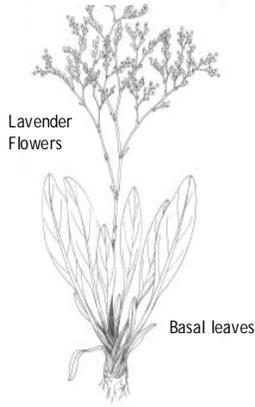
✿ July - September



Distichlis spicata (Salt Grass)

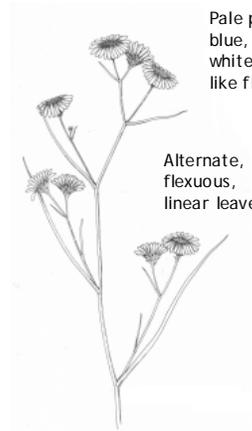
↑ 8-16 in

✿ July - September



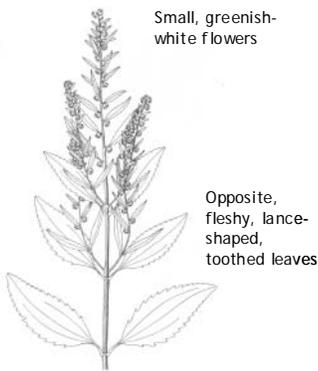
Limonium spp. (Sea Lavender)

↑ up to 3 ft * July - October



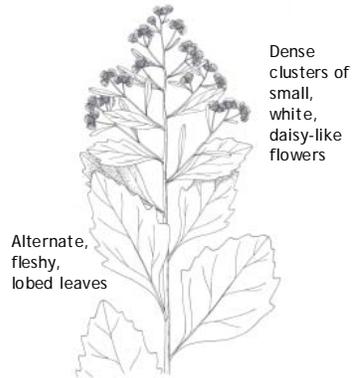
Aster tenuifolius (Salt Marsh Aster)

↑ 1-4 ft * July - September



Iva frutescens (Marsh Elder)

↑ 2-6 ft * August - October



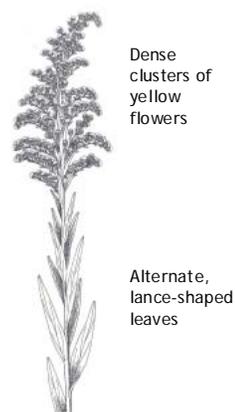
Baccharis halimifolia (Groundsel Tree)

↑ up to 8 ft * September - October



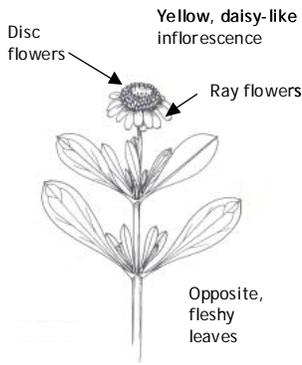
Panicum virgatum (Switch Grass)

↑ up to 3 ft. * July - September



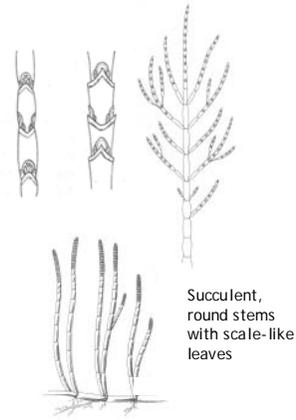
Solidago sempervirens (Seaside Goldenrod)

↑ 4-5 ft * August - October



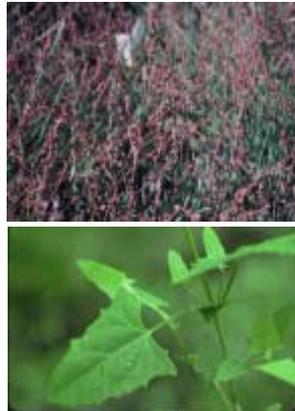
Borrichia frutescens (Sea Oxeye)

↑ up to 3 ft * July - September



Salicornia spp. (Glasswort)

↑ 4-20 in * July - November



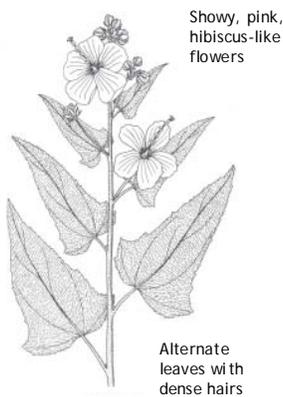
Atriplex patula (Orach Spearscale or Marsh Orach)

↑ up to 4 ft * July - September



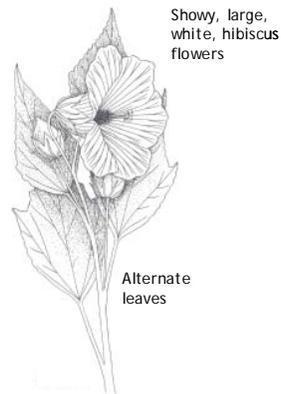
Phragmites australis (Phragmites or Reed Grass)

↑ 6- 14 ft * September - October



Kosteletzkya virginica (Marsh Mallow)

↑ 2-3 ft * July - August



Hibiscus moscheutos (Marsh Hibiscus/Rose Mallow)

↑ up to 12 ft * July - September

All illustrations in this brochure by Abigail Rorer from *Field Guide to Coastal Wetland Plants of the Southeastern United States*, Ralph W. Tiner, 1987, University of Massachusetts Press, Amherst, MA. 328 pp. This book is recommended reading for an easy-to-use field guide to over 400 plants found in tidal wetlands of the Southeast, with more than 250 plants illustrated. It includes species found in the following habitats: tidal aquatic beds, salt and brackish marshes, salt flats, mangrove swamps, and tidal freshwater marshes and swamps. Simple keys guide the reader in identification of these species. An overview of coastal wetland ecology is also presented along with information on and figures showing the general distribution of coastal wetlands along the South Atlantic and Gulf Coasts (Virginia to Texas).