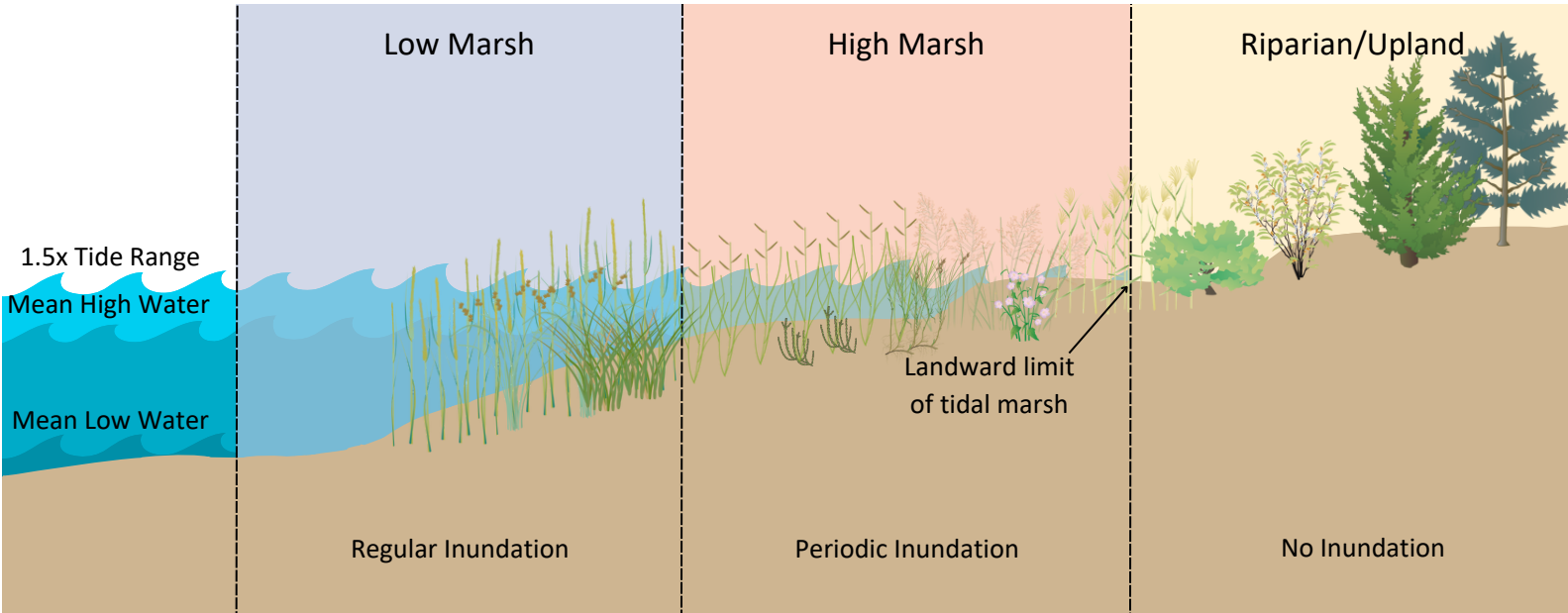


Field Guide to Virginia Salt and Brackish Marsh Plants



Plant depictions courtesy of IAN symbol library

Marsh zone

Marsh Zone Key

- Low Marsh
- High Marsh
- Riparian/Upland

Annotated drawing

5 – 30 flower spikes

Plant photo

***Spartina alterniflora* (Smooth Cordgrass)**

Common name

1-8 ft

Plant height

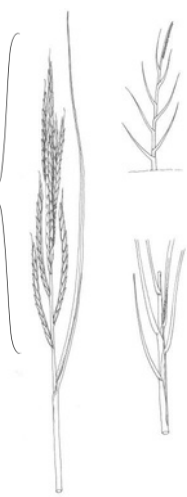
August - October

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.

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).

5 – 30
flower
spikes



Spartina alterniflora (Smooth Cordgrass)

↑ 1-8 ft 🌸 August - October

Round,
sharply-pointed,
dark green
leaves

Round
stem



Juncus roemerianus (Black Needle Rush)

↑ up to 3 ft 🌸 April - October



Triangular
stem



Bolboschoenus robustus (Salt Marsh Bulrush)

↑ 2-3 ft 🌸 July - October

Small,
greenish-
white
flowers

Opposite,
fleshy,
lance-
shaped,
toothed
leaves



Iva frutescens (Marsh Elder)

↑ 2-6 ft 🌸 August - October



Straw colored,
paniculate
inflorescence



Panicum virgatum (Switch Grass)

↑ up to 3 ft 🌸 July - September

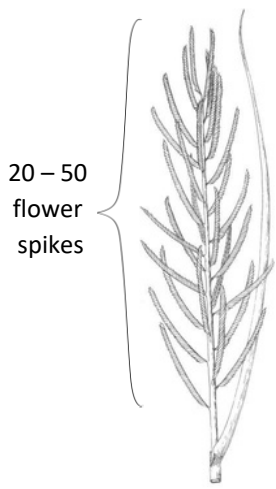
Leaves in-rolled,
not 2-ranked

Densely overlapping
spikelets borne only
on one side of axis



Spartina patens (Salt Meadow Hay)

↑ 1-3 ft 🌸 July - September

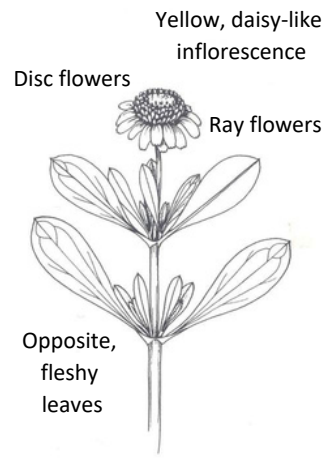


20 – 50
flower
spikes



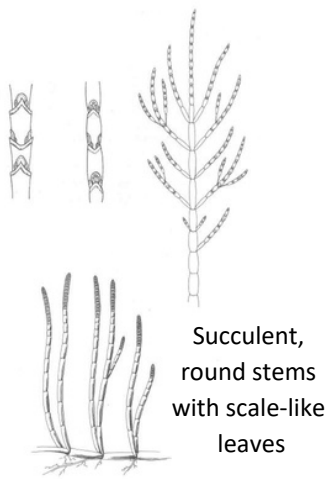
Spartina cynosuroides (Big Cordgrass)

↑ up to 10 ft 🌸 July - September



Borrichia frutescens (Sea Oxeye)

↑ up to 3 ft 🌸 July - September



Succulent,
round stems
with scale-like
leaves

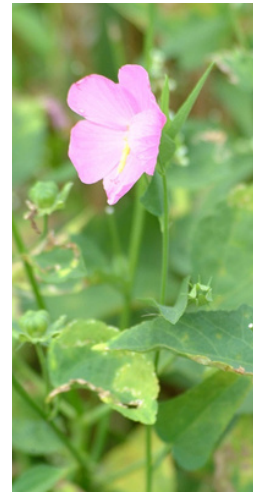


Salicornia spp. (Glasswort)

↑ 4-20 in 🌸 July - November

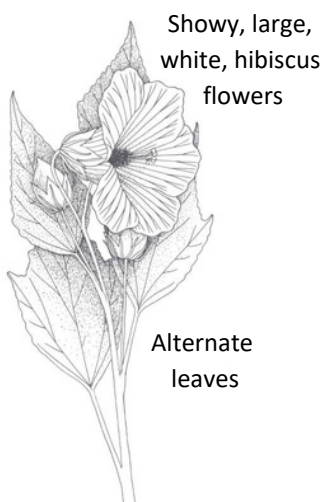


Alternate
leaves with
dense hairs



Kosteletzkya virginica (Marsh Mallow)

↑ 2-3 ft 🌸 July - August



Showy, large,
white, hibiscus
flowers

Alternate
leaves



Hibiscus moscheutos (Marsh Hibiscus)

↑ up to 12 ft 🌸 July - September



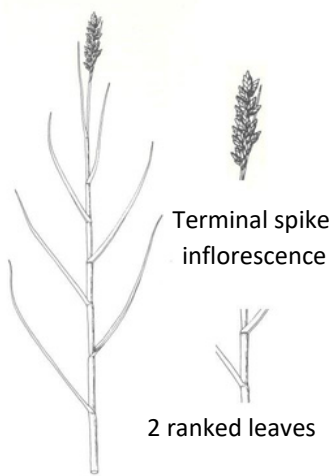
Dense
clusters of
yellow
flowers

Alternate,
lance-shaped
leaves



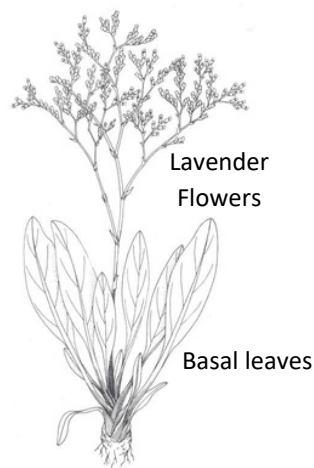
Solidago sempervirens (Seaside Goldenrod)

↑ 4-5 ft 🌸 August - October



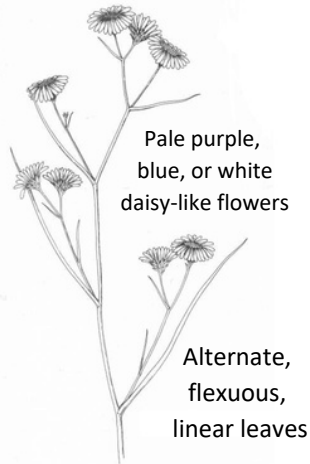
Distichlis spicata (Salt Grass)

↑ 8-16 in 🌸 July - September



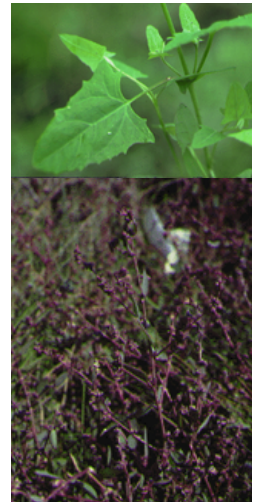
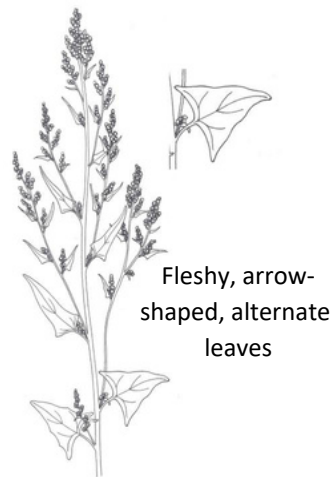
Limonium carolinianum (Sea Lavender)

↑ up to 3 ft 🌸 July - October



Symphyotrichum tenuifolium (Salt Marsh Aster)

↑ 1-4 ft 🌸 July - September



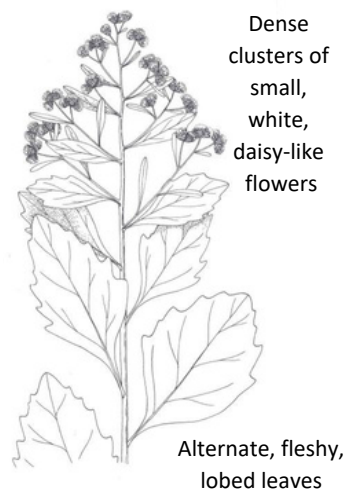
Atriplex patula (Marsh Orach)

↑ up to 4 ft 🌸 July - September



Phragmites australis (Phragmites or Reed Grass)

↑ 6-14 ft 🌸 September - October



Baccharis halimifolia (Groundsel Tree)

↑ up to 8 ft 🌸 September - October