

Common Wetlands Plants in DE, PA, & MD

Wetlands in Delaware, Pennsylvania, and Maryland share many plant species adapted to saturated soils, but each region has its own mix due to climate, geology, and hydrology.

Delaware

The **Delaware Wetland Plant Field Guide** identifies many common wetland plants organized into freshwater and saltwater categories. Examples include:

- **Emergent plants:** Cattails (*Typha* spp.), bulrushes (*Schoenoplectus* spp.), smartweeds, and arrowheads (*Sagittaria* spp.).
- **Floating-leaf plants:** Water hyacinth (*Eichhornia crassipes*) and spatterdock (*Nuphar* spp.).
- **Shrubs:** Buttonbush (*Cephalanthus occidentalis*) and alders (*Alnus* spp.).
- **Herbaceous wetland plants:** American water-plantain (*Alisma subcordatum*), purplestem beggarticks (*Bidens connata*), and swamp milkweed (*Asclepias incarnata*).

Pennsylvania

The **Flora of Pennsylvania** includes wetland plants adapted to low-oxygen soils and fluctuating water depths.

Common examples include:

- **Emergent plants:** Cattails (*Typha*), sedges (*Carex*), pickerelweed (*Pontederia cordata*), and American water-plantain (*Alisma subcordatum*).
- **Floating-leaf plants:** Spatterdock (*Nuphar advena*), watershield (*Brasenia schreberi*), and fragrant waterlily (*Nymphaea odorata*).
- **Shrubs:** Buttonbush (*Cephalanthus occidentalis*), swamp rose (*Rosa palustris*), willow species, and alders (*Alnus*).
- **Specialty plants:** Sundews (*Drosera*), pitcher plants (*Sarracenia*), and marsh-pennywort (*Hydrocotyle americana*).

Maryland

The **Maryland Wetland Plant List** includes species classified by wetland indicator status. Examples include:

- **Trees:** Red maple (*Acer rubrum*), silver maple (*Acer saccharinum*), black gum (*Nyssa sylvatica*), bald cypress (*Taxodium distichum*), and willows (*Salix* spp.).
- **Shrubs:** Buttonbush (*Cephalanthus occidentalis*), serviceberry (*Amelanchier canadensis*), and chokeberry (*Aronia* spp.).
- **Herbaceous plants:** Marsh-pennywort (*Hydrocotyle americana*), purplestem beggarticks (*Bidens connata*), and swamp milkweed (*Asclepias incarnata*).

Shared Species Across the Three States

Common Name	Scientific Name	General Wetland Use / Occurrence
Buttonbush	<i>Cephalanthus occidentalis</i>	Common wetland shrub found throughout Delaware, Pennsylvania, and Maryland.
American water-plantain	<i>Alisma subcordatum</i>	Common in shallow freshwater wetlands across the three states.
Purplestem beggarticks	<i>Bidens connata</i>	Occurs in wet soils, marshes, and other saturated areas.
Swamp milkweed	<i>Asclepias incarnata</i>	Native wetland perennial that also provides value to pollinators.
Cattails	<i>Typha</i> spp.	Widespread emergent plants commonly associated with marshes and wetland edges.
Sedges	<i>Carex</i> spp.	Diverse group occurring in many freshwater wetland and saturated-soil habitats.

Identification Tip

For plant identification and wetland assessment, consult the DNREC Delaware Wetland Plant Field Guide, PAEnflowered's wetland plant catalog, and Maryland's wetland plant resources. These references include plant descriptions and identification information that can help distinguish wetland vegetation from upland species.