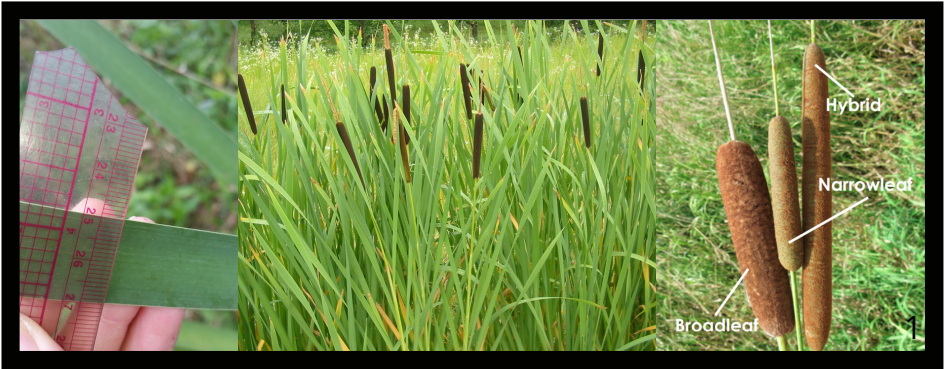


Native
Emergent
Aquatic
Plant

BROAD-LEAVED CATTAIL

Typha latifolia



About

Broad-leaved Cattail is a familiar and recognizable sight across Canada. They are easily distinguished by their velvety brown seed heads that resemble a 'cat's tail'. This macrophyte is found in shallow waters such as shorelands, marshes and saturated soils. It is a perennial, grass-like plant that offers habitat for marsh birds and muskrats. Currently, our native Broad-leaved Cattail is threatened by Phragmites, an invasive wetland plant.



Identification

- Brown, cylindrical flowering spike (reaching about 20 cm) transforms into fluffy, white mass in autumn
- Broad, linear leaf blades reaching 6 - 23 mm across
- Leaves grow from a single base and are pale grayish-green in colour
- Stems are tall, erect and unbranched
- Can grow up to 1-3 meters tall in dense clumps
- Male flower (staminate) is at the top of plant while female flower (pistillate) is just below

References

[Beautiful Non-Invasive Plants for Your Garden](#) produced by Ontario Invasive Plant Council

[Typha latifolia](#) developed by NC State Extension

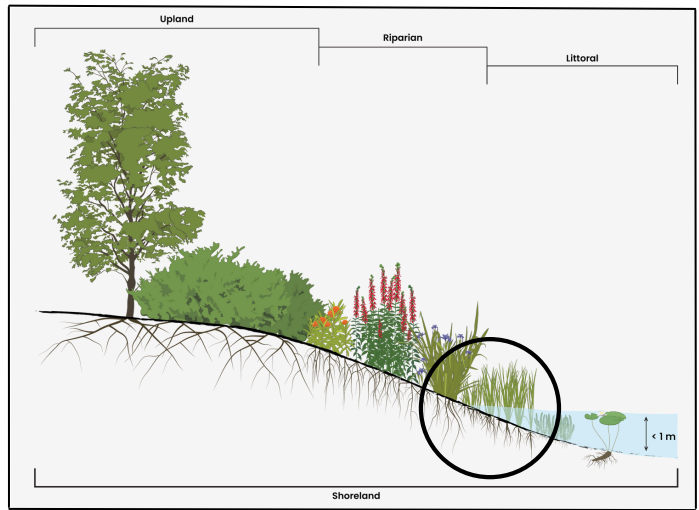
Photo 1 produced by [Mark Burchick](#)

[Typha latifolia](#) by The University of Texas

[Cattails and other wetland plants](#) produced by High Park Nature

Where is this species found in the shoreland?

Broadleaf Cattail is found in the littoral zone of the shoreland, as demonstrated in the diagram.



Did you know that Indigenous peoples use many parts of the Cattail for medicinal and food purposes? Once the cylindrical, brown stalk transforms into fluffy material, it is used in bedding and pillows!



Benefits

- Provides habitat for:
 - birds such as red-winged blackbirds
 - fish species including various minnows
 - benthic invertebrates
- Stabilizes shorelands and prevents erosion through dense root systems
- Filters harmful chemicals from entering the water by acting as a buffer
- Improves water quality
 - Often used in bioremediation projects to clean contaminated water
- Provides privacy for homeowners if grown densely



Don't weed me!

Broad-leaved Cattail is a beneficial native species that can grow prolifically in its preferred environment. It is important to distinguish our native cattail from harmful invasive species such as Narrow-leaved Cattail (*Typha angustifolia*). It can be distinguished from our native cattail through its narrow leaves, as they reach only 3 - 8 mm wide. The brown seed head on the invasive Narrow-leaved Cattail is significantly thinner and shorter compared to our native species.