



## Spartina spp.

Common name: Cordgrass

*Spartina spp.* (spar-TIE-na) are aggressive invasive plant species that invade intertidal zones such as mudflats and beaches. These species can out-compete native plants to the extent that huge areas are covered in *Spartina* alone. The result is a loss of fish, shellfish and bird habitat, and a potential decline in native plant and animal populations and overall biodiversity. Certain species, such as *Spartina anglica*, also threaten a change in tidal patterns as their rhizomes (root system) trap sediment, increasing risk of flooding.

If you think you have found *Spartina*, or are interested in getting your organization involved, contact **River Works** at tel: 604.659.3503 or email: [riverworks@vanaqua.org](mailto:riverworks@vanaqua.org).

For more information about *Spartina*, check out our website:

[www.spartina.ca](http://www.spartina.ca)

### DISTINGUISHING FEATURES

- Perennial, salt-tolerant grass
- Bright green to grayish green
- Round, hollow stems
- Fine hairs at the ligule, which is a thin outgrowth at the junction of leaf and leafstalk
- Species originate in England, Chile, and Eastern US



PHOTOGRAPHY : G.L. WILLIAMS

The **Spartina Project** is managed by a consortium of concerned conservation leaders. As a group we are committed to the preservation of aquatic habitats through monitoring, restoration, research, education and public involvement. Since the discovery of *Spartina anglica* in Boundary Bay in 2003, staff, partners and volunteers have begun the annual task of mapping and manually removing this alien invader from local shorelines.

### DUCKS UNLIMITED CANADA

VANCOUVER AQUARIUM—RIVER WORKS

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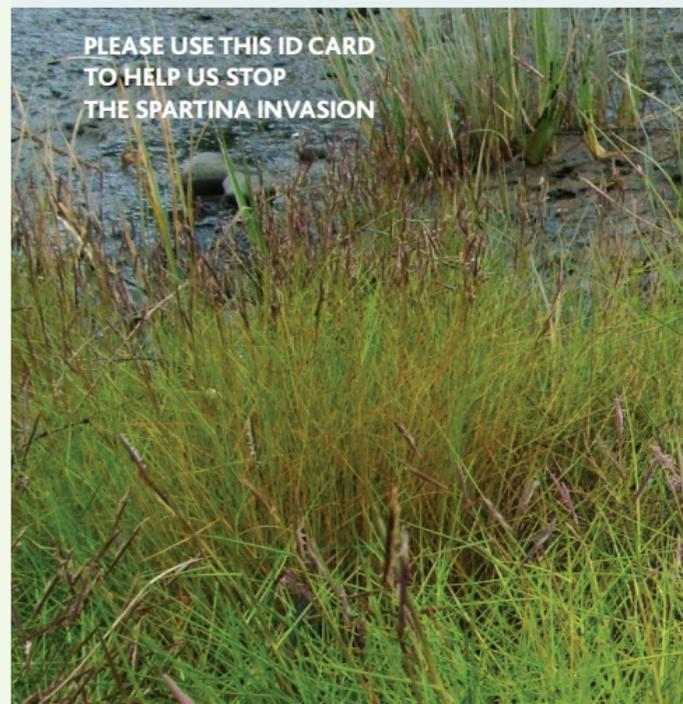
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BC SHORELINE INVASION



## SPARTINA



PLEASE USE THIS ID CARD  
TO HELP US STOP  
THE SPARTINA INVASION



## *Spartina anglica*

English Cordgrass



### DESCRIPTION

- Leaves: flat when fresh, 5-12mm wide and 5-40cm long
- Stems: tall, often reddish, up to 1.5m high
- Flower heads: resemble wheat, consisting of 2-12 "spikes" on one side only
- Growth pattern: circular clumps or clones
- Distinctive 45-90° angle between leaf blades and stem

### ECOLOGY

- Habitat: ranges from mixed-vegetation marsh to mudflats where few other species will grow
- Flowering period: June through September

### LOCATED (TO DATE)

- Fraser River delta mudflats



## *Spartina densiflora*

Dense Flowered Cordgrass



### DESCRIPTION

- Leaves: grayish, rolled inwards when fresh, 4-8mm wide and 12-43cm long
- Stems: up to 1.5m high
- Flower heads: 2-13 spikes, 60° from central axis
- Growth pattern: dense tufts

### ECOLOGY

- Habitat: cobble beaches and salt marshes, in the mid- to high-marsh zone
- Flowering period: April through July
- *S. densiflora* has not yet been observed to out-compete native species, but must be monitored as it has the potential to do so

### LOCATED (TO DATE)

- Fanny Bay and Ship's Point on Vancouver Island



## *Spartina patens*

Saltmeadow Cordgrass



### DESCRIPTION

- Leaves: rolled inwards when fresh, 1-4mm wide and 10-50cm long
- Stems: thin and flexible, up to 1.2m in height
- Flower heads: droopy and reddish in colour
- Growth pattern: forms dense mats

### ECOLOGY

- Habitat: high marsh zone
- Flowering period: late summer

### LOCATED (TO DATE)

- Comox area on Vancouver Island and Burrard Inlet in North Vancouver



## *Distichlis spicata*

Seashore Saltgrass



**DESCRIPTION** *Don't mistake this native grass for Spartina!* It's similar in appearance to *Spartina* spp., but with several important differences:

- Leaves: yellowish-green, 2-4mm wide
- Stems: solid (not hollow), and short (10-40cm in height)
- Growth pattern: dense patches
- Ligule: has ridge with very small, dense bristles rather than fine hairs

### ECOLOGY

- Habitat: salt marshes and seashores

### LOCATED (TO DATE)

- Native to British Columbia