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Juncus balticus

[Synonyms : *Juncus arcticus*, *Juncus arcticus* ssp *balticus*, *Juncus ater*, *Juncus balticus* var. *montanus*, *Juncus filiformis*, *Juncus mexicanus*, *Juncus stenocarpus*]

BALTIC RUSH is a perennial. Native to northern Europe and northern North America, it has dark brown flower heads shielded by narrow leaf-like spathes.

It is also known as *Östersjötåg* (Swedish), Thread-leaved rush, Thread rush, Wire grass, and Wire rush.

The flowers are pollinated by the wind.

Baltic rush is considered to be threatened in the wild in Britain.

Balticus means 'of or from the area of the Baltic Sea'.

For the Hopi North American tribe Baltic rush has some aquatic significance in their ceremonial rituals.

The leaves are used by some of the North American Pomo Indians to thread clamshell beads on while they are being smoothed to make jewellery, and the Cheyenne tribe sew patterns on leather with the rootlets.

While the Klamath and Montana Indian tribes both wove matting from the grass stems, they and the Kawaiisu, Cheyenne and Pomo Indians also used it for weaving baskets – and the Panamint tribe (who lived in Death Valley in California) used the light yellow-brown part of the stems for decorating their baskets.

Baltic rush provided food for the North American Paiute Indians who ate the minute seeds and the sugar that forms on the plant tops as candy – and they also fermented the stems to make an alcoholic drink.

The rush provides forage for elk and livestock, including cattle.

The plant also offers cover for both waterfowl and non-game birds.