

Dwarf (Japanese) eelgrass (*Zostera japonica*)

Habitat: Aquatic, Salt Marshes & Mud-flats

Family name: Zosteraceae



Dwarf eelgrass or (*Japanese eelgrass*), is a species of eelgrass native to the sea-coast of eastern Asia from Russia to Vietnam, and introduced to the western coast of North America.

It is found in the intertidal zone and the shallow subtidal, and grows on sandy, muddy and silty substrates.

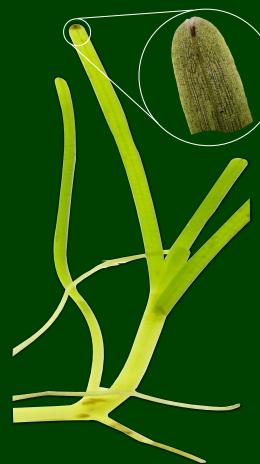
Description: Dwarf eelgrass is a small species and usually grows on the upper edge of sea-grass beds, typically on mudflats exposed at low tide. The plants lose many of their leaves in the winter.

This sea-grass is mainly found in sheltered bays where the seabed is sand, mud or silt.

It occurs in the intertidal zone and at depths down to about 3 m



Reproduction: Dwarf eelgrass exhibits both sexual and asexual reproductive capabilities. As with all angiospermae, it produces flowers. The pollen of this particular species is dispersed by changing tides it is stored in neutrally buoyant pollen in turn reduces water clarity and light availability for Dwarf eelgrass.



The colonization of sparsely vegetated or bare intertidal flats by dwarf eelgrass will result in a drastic modification of habitat. Increased eelgrass coverage slows water flow, increases sedimentation rates, and reduces mean sediment grain size. Eventually, dwarf eelgrass patches may raise the elevation of mudflats and disrupt ocean currents



Similar species: Seawrack (*Zostera marina*) is a native eelgrass that looks similar to dwarf eelgrass. Seawrack can be distinguished from dwarf eelgrass by the presence of longer stems (over 183 cm long), bigger leaves (up to 110 cm long and 12 mm wide), five to eleven veins per leaf, and round leaf apexes.



Pacific eelgrass, *Zostera marina*

Dwarf eelgrass can be further distinguished from Seawrack by the presence of open (*rather than tubular*) leaf sheaths with 2 membranous flaps that persist without rupturing.

