

Plant Indicator Species for Wet Meadow

The plants described below can often be used as field indicators for identifying this habitat when other physical and biological features of the habitat are present.

sensitive fern (*Onoclea sensibilis*)

(fern)

- sterile fronds with pinna merely wavy-margined (not dissected like many other ferns)
- fertile fronds with tightly arranged, bead-like structures (green, turning brown) that persist through winter
- fiddleheads (in spring) are pale red



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<http://www.henriettesherbal.com>

soft rush (*Juncus effusus*)

(rush)

- usually 1 – 2.5 ft tall (can be up to 5 ft)
- leaves and stem round in cross-section, and hollow
- inflorescence a spray that seems to emerge from side of stem



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woolgrass (*Scirpus cyperinus*) (bulrush)

- usually 3 - 4 ft tall (sometimes taller)
- inflorescence a graceful drooping spray
- stem bluntly triangular in cross-section
- fluffy bristles give mature inflorescence a woolly appearance



reed canary-grass (*Phalaris arundinacea*) (grass)

- usually 2.5 – 4 ft tall (sometimes taller)
- often forms large, dense stands
- inflorescence a closed spike, or somewhat open and narrowly triangular in overall shape
- florets with papery scales, greenish or purple at first, becoming cream-colored to light tan



common reed (*Phragmites australis*) (grass)

- robust grass, usually 6 – 8 ft tall (can be up to 13 ft)
- often forms large, dense stands
- leaves usually about 1 in wide
- inflorescence a large plume at top of stem; purplish, tan, or brown



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blue flag (*Iris versicolor*)

(forb)

- our native blue iris; very similar to cultivated forms
- leaves broad, about 1 in wide, sword-shaped
- flower large, showy, blue and white (May – August)
- seed pod stout, 1.5 – 2 in long; green at first, turning brown



purple loosestrife (*Lythrum salicaria*)

(forb)

- usually 4 – 5 ft tall (or taller) and often forming large stands
- flowers showy, magenta, in multiple large spikes at top of stem (July – September)
- leaves typically opposite or in whorls of three
- stem four-angled in cross-section; dead stems and brown flower spikes persist through winter



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spotted Joe-Pye-weed (*Eutrochium maculatum* var. *maculatum*) (forb) synonym: *Eupatorium maculatum*

- robust plant, usually 4 – 5 ft tall (sometimes taller)
- leaves in whorls of 4 – 5, coarsely toothed
- stem with purple spots, and dark purple near leaf axils
- flowers dull pink, in flat-topped cluster (July – September)



late goldenrod (*Solidago gigantea*) (forb)

- robust plant, similar in general appearance to many other goldenrods
- spray of yellow flowers at top of plant (like other goldenrods)
- stem smooth, green or reddish, with waxy white or bluish film



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