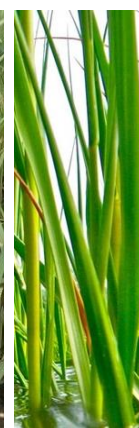


Saltmarsh grasses are an important part of the tidal wetlands and natural shorelines of the Elizabeth River.

Saltmarsh grasses help flood control, erosion, serve as habitat and improve water quality.



## Smooth Cordgrass

*Spartina alterniflora*

**Size:** 2-8 feet with wide stem. **Range:** They live in tidal zone and like to stay wet.

**Habitat:** Native to North America and the Elizabeth River and is a salt loving grass. You can find Smooth Cordgrass along the shorelines like the Elizabeth River and at times you can see salt crystals on the stems. Periwinkles climb up and down the stems to eat what's on the surface of the Elizabeth River and to escape from predators.



Restored wetlands at Paradise Creek Nature Park, Portsmouth, VA

**Facts:** Thousands of Elizabeth River Project's River Star school students nurture and plant Smooth Cordgrass as part of the Elizabeth River Project's Wetland in the Classroom and as pictured to right the Dominion Energy Learning Barge has live wetlands that function and teach youth.



**Appearance:** Smooth Cordgrass are tall, elegant grasses with green silvery leaves, turning brown red in the fall. The blooms are spike yellow in the summer and their roots grow very deep and help decrease erosion.

**Predators:** Shorebirds and songbirds eat these grasses seeds, while geese and muskrats eat their roots.

**Benefits:** Smooth Cordgrass provide habitat to a large variety of fish, birds, and mammals. One third of our countries threatened and endangered species rely on Smooth Cordgrass and for habitat, shelter, food and a nursery.

**What can you do?** Help restore and protect wetlands.



Smooth Cordgrass in fall.

### On-Line Resources

[https://www.chesapeakebay.net/S=0/fieldguide/critter/smooth\\_cordgrass](https://www.chesapeakebay.net/S=0/fieldguide/critter/smooth_cordgrass)

<https://plants.usda.gov/core/profile?symbol=SPAL>

[https://www.wildflower.org/plants/result.php?id\\_plant=SPAL](https://www.wildflower.org/plants/result.php?id_plant=SPAL)



[www.elizabethriver.org](http://www.elizabethriver.org)