HIPPURIDACEAE MARE’S-TAIL FAMILY

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Perennial herbs, emergent-aquatic or amphibious, of brackish and fresh water, generally glabrous. STEMS unbranched, the submerged stems lax, the emergent stems erect, arising from creeping rhizomes. LEAVES whorled in sets of (4)-6-12(-16), simple, estipulate; margins entire; submersed leaves slender, thin and flaccid, often soon degenerating; aerial leaves thicker and firmer, numerous and rather crowded, linear-attenuate. FLOWERS solitary in upper leaf axils, inconspicuous, sessile or the lower on short pedicels; perfect or rarely imperfect, occasionally polygamous; calyx reduced to an inconspicuous, 2-4-lobed or subentire rim around the top of the ovary; petals none; stamen 1, with a short, slender filament and a large 2-celled sagittate anther; pistil simple, the ovary inferior, unicarpellate; style terminal, elongate, slender, generally lying in the groove between the two anther sacs. FRUIT a small, smooth achene. —A monogeneric family, 1-3 spp., of temperate regions.

Hippuris L. Mare’s-tail

Hippuris vulgaris L. (common). Mare’s-tail. —AERIAL STEMS mostly 20-60 (-100) cm tall. LEAVES mostly 5-35 mm long, 1-3 mm wide. FLOWER with anthers 1 mm long, 0.5-1 mm wide, the filament about as long; style 1-2 mm long. FRUITS ellipsoid-obovoid, 1.7-2.5 mm long, 1 mm wide. 2n = 32. —Rooted in mud of shallow, standing or slow-moving water, and in wet meadows: Apache co. (White, Chuska and Lukachukai Mts.); 2300-2850 m (7600-9400 ft); Jun-Jul (fr. Jul-Aug); widely distributed in the Northern Hemisphere, and in s S. Amer. Seeds and foliage often eaten by waterfowl.