



# Saururus cernuus

## lizard's tail

Family	Saururaceae		
Origin	Native		
WIS Code	OBL	CoC	8

### DESCRIPTION

This creeping perennial forms large colonies from rhizomes (underground stems). Jointed stems are zigzag branched (0.5 to 1 m tall) with alternate, stalked, heart-shaped, dark green leaves (to 20 cm long). Base of the leaf stalks appear to hug or wrap the stem.

### FLOWERS AND FRUITS

June through September. Small white perfect flowers (male and female together) are found on slender spikes (6 to 15 cm long) with nodding curved tips. Flower spikes arise from the axils (where leaf meets stem) of upper leaves. Fruits, formed along the spikes, are fleshy capsules becoming strongly wrinkled when dry and each contains a single seed.

### HABITAT

Pond edges, beaver ponds, mucky seepage swamps, floodplain forests, stream banks.

### SIMILAR SPECIES

Japanese knotweed, *Polygonum cuspidatum*, is a bamboo-like plant with hollow reddish stems (to 3 m tall) growing in similar zig-zag habit and with similar leaf shape as *S. cernuus*. It differs in its many branching clustered flower spikes (*S. cernuus* are single spikes) and winged seed covering.



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*Saururus cernuus*



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*Polygonum cuspidatum*