

## MARSH ERYNGO/BUTTON SNAKE-ROOT

*Eryngium aquaticum*

By Helen Hamilton, *President of the John Clayton Chapter, VNPS*

A dramatic, perennial native plant of marshes and bogs, this eryngo has round, bluish flower heads surrounded by spiny bluish leaflike bracts that are longer than the flower heads. Growing to 3 feet tall, the stems have parallel ribs with leaves arranged alternately on the stem. The lance-shaped leaves are larger toward the base of the plant, up to 20 inches long and 2 inches wide), with wavy margins. The upper leaves may be spiny-toothed.



Strictly a wetland species, marsh eryngo grows in brackish and tidal fresh marshes, nontidal swamps, wet pinelands, bogs, ponds, streams and ditches. It adapts well to average garden soils. In Virginia the plant is native to the coastal counties; it is also found from New Jersey south along the Coastal Plain to central Florida and west to Texas.

Various homeopathic sources list marsh eryngo for treatment of some urinary and respiratory disorders. ❖

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**Photo:** Marsh eryngo (*Eryngium aquaticum*) taken by Helen Hamilton in the Williamsburg Botanical Garden

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