

INTRODUCTION

The family Alismataceae is represented with 14 genera from which only 2 of them occur in South America. The genus *Alisma* is occasionally found in Argentina and Chile being introduced in this area from North America. The *Alisma* occurs not in Brasil.

In Brasil, occur two genera of the family Alismataceae; the genus *Echinodorus* and *Sagittaria*. Both genera contain aquatic or amphibious, marshy plants with this characteristic: carpels spirally arranged, inflorescence with conspicuous flowers in sessile or subsessile whorls. The nutlets are flattened, leaves in rosettes with or without creeping stem.

Both genera differs as follow:

- 1 (2) Flowers bisexual, nutlets with lateral ribs and usually with lateral glands
Echinodorus
- 2 Flowers dioecious, monoecious or polygamous, nutlets without glands and without lateral ribs, or the ribs are slightly indicated *Sagittaria*