
Common Reed Grass

Phragmites australis



This invasive grass typically grows in or near shallow water, and displaces native marsh plants as well as blocking sunlight to existing wetland life. It grows 15' or more.

- Leaves are broad and pointed, encircling stiff, vertical stalks.
- Leaves are flat 6-24" long, and .4 - 2.4" wide, with white hairs where the leaf meets the stalk. The leaf sheath is difficult to remove.
- Stems are dull and ribbed under the sheath.
- Flower heads are fluffy gray or purplish 6-16" long in July to October, and stay on the plant all winter.
- Seeds are brown, light weight and less than .5" long. In fall, this grass turns beige to brown.

NOTE: There is a native *Phragmites* similar to this invasive, so descriptive details help to distinguish the differences: On the native, leaf sheaths fall off, stems bend easily, and stems are smooth and shiny under the sheaths.

Phragmites has invaded this wetland

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HOW TO CONTROL:

- Biological controls are being studied and show promise, but are not yet ready to be implemented.
 - Meanwhile, the most effective way to control phragmites is to stress the plants; that is, cut or mow to 6" above ground level in mid-late July, or snap below the water level 2-3 times/year. Compost cut material in dry, upland areas. Repeat cutting until no re-sprouting occurs. Expect to treat for 2-3 years.
 - Glyphosate treatment is possible in wetlands only by licensed commercial applicators and DEP permit. This treatment is done after seed head forms by tying together and cutting the stems to 3', then applying 25% glyphosate into the stems, and repeating for 3 years.
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Sources

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<https://www.invasive.org/publications/PhragBook.pdf>

Controls

[https://wiki.bugwood.org/Archive:BCIPEUS/Phragmites australis](https://wiki.bugwood.org/Archive:BCIPEUS/Phragmites_australis);

<https://www.invasive.org/publications/PhragBook.pdf>;

Casco Bay Invasive Species Network, Winning the War on Weeds, p.24

