



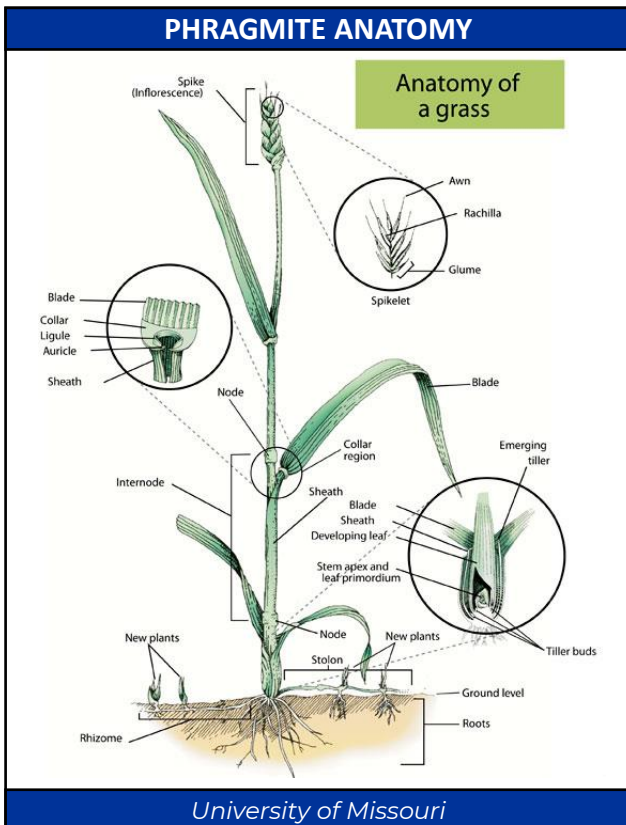
Common Reed

BVGC INVASIVE SPECIES FACT SHEET

Common Reed (*Phragmite australis*) is a highly invasive wetland grass that spreads by both an extensive network of underground rhizomes and prolific airborne seed heads. Choking out native New England grasses such as cat-o-nine-tails, it can take over a wetland completely – eventually making the marshland impassable to foot traffic, and inhabitable for native wildlife.

Description: A perennial grass, 15+ feet high, rough to the touch. Elongated leaves are blue green, typically 1.5" wide at their widest point. Flowers form in bushy panicles, golden in color, and seeds are spread easily by wind and water. Plants spreads vegetatively through rhizomes and transport of rhizome fragments. Prefers full sun, and mostly found in disturbed to pristine wet areas including tidal and non-tidal wetlands, brackish and fresh-water marshes, river edges, shores of lakes and ponds, roadsides and ditches.

LOOKALIKE: It can be distinguished from the American Reed (*Phragmites americanus*) by the internodes in the middle and upper stem. In the American reed the internodes are smooth, shiny reddish-brown color. The internodes of *Phragmites Australis* are dull, ridged and tan colored in the growing season. Unlike the American Reed which is quite rare, the Common Reed grows in thick stands and is prevalent.



Ecological Threat:

Aggressive growth of the Common Reed replaces native grasses, sedges, and herbaceous plants. It provides poor quality habitat for insects, birds and amphibians. Fish populations that reproduce in wetlands and marshes inundated with phragmites suffer higher egg and juvenile mortality.

The plant also exudes allelopathic compounds from its roots, causing root death of nearby native plants. It also alters wetland hydrology, increases the potential for fire and reduces and degrades wetland wildlife habitat due in part to its very dense growth habit.



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Extermination:

These plants are typically associated with wetlands and guidelines should be followed according to the MA Wetlands protection Act. Please contact your conservation agent and develop a plan.

Procedure 1: Herbicide

Use of an herbicide has been the most effective method of phragmites treatment. In conjunction with your Conservation department, use an herbicide that least impacts the native environment. Herbicides that can be painted on are probably better than foliar sprays depending on the area. Please contact a professional.

Procedure 2: Organic

There is some data with regards to cutting or mowing. Again, please contact your conservation agent to develop a plan.



Phragmites australis



Phragmites can grow over 15' tall

Disposal:

Even dried plants used in floral arrangements may still have seeds that can spread. Bag the remains for safe disposal or burn.



Phragmites Australis are frequently found in areas regulated by the Massachusetts Wetlands Protection Act, and extermination may not be permissible.