

COMMON REED - OR - PHRAGMITE

[Phragmites australis]

The Common Reed is a perennial plant of the grass family native to Eurasia. It may be found in wetlands, along roadsides, in ditches, on the banks of watercourses and on some vacant lots.

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HEIGHT

From 3 to 5 m.

STEM

Green or yellowish, hollow and rigid.

LEAVES

Green with slightly bluish tint, tapered to pointy, rough and sharp edges.

FLOWERS

Shaped like feathers (panicle) from 20 to 30 cm, first purple then ripening to dark brown.
Flowers from August to September.

ROOTS

Rhizomes which spread over several metres and stolons that produce stems several metres from the plant.





CONDITIONS WHICH PROMOTE ITS GROWTH

Sunny locations, humidity and bare soil



SPREAD

By rhizomes (underground stems and by runners (aerial stems).



DISPERSAL

By wind (seeds), by water (watercourses and runoff water), by the transport of soil, horticulture as well as by vehicles.



REPERCUSSIONS

Loss of biodiversity, uniformity of colonized landscapes, reduction of agricultural yield and increased costs associated with elimination and control.



METHODS TO REDUCE ITS SPREAD

1. Do not plant Common Reed.
2. Immediately seed bare soil with a rapid growing species (such as creeping clover) or by planting sod or herbaceous perennials.
3. Plant trees and shrubs to create shade and to prevent seed germination.
4. Control the plant with the following techniques:

SMALLER AFFECTED AREAS:

- Dig the soil in the affected zone to a depth of about 0.5 m and within a radius of 1 m making sure to remove all the roots, rhizomes and stolons.
- Backfill with clean soil free of

Common Reed and seed immediately.

LARGE AFFECTED AREAS:

- Cut the seed « feathers » before the end of August to avoid their dispersal.
- Cut repeatedly every two weeks throughout the growing season (from May to October). Cutting the plants close to the ground will weaken them.

IN EITHER CASE, COVERING IS RECOMMENDED TO ERADICATE THE COLONIES.

COVERING

This technique consists of spreading a black waterproof covering over the affected area after having cut and removed the plants. The covering should be weighted down (sand bags) and remain as close as possible to the soil for a period of two years. Certain plants may survive and need to be uprooted. Regular follow up is necessary to regularly cut the stems that extend beyond the sides of the tarp.

TRANSPORT AND ELIMINATION

Do not compost any part of the Common Reed. Plant residues should be placed in a closed plastic bag and deposited in your garbage bin. Should the quantities be too large, bury them under 2 m of clean soil free of invasive plant species.

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