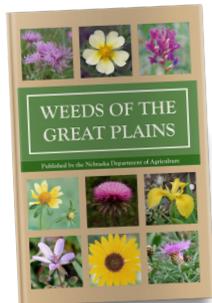


NOXIOUS WEEDS ARE EVERYONE'S CONCERN

Noxious weeds compete with pastures and crops, reducing yields substantially. Some noxious weeds are directly poisonous or injurious to man, livestock and wildlife. The losses resulting from noxious weed infestations can be staggering, costing residents of Nebraska millions of dollars due to production losses. This not only directly affects the landowner, but erodes the tax base for all residents in the State of Nebraska.

The business of noxious weed control is everyone's concern, and noxious weed control benefits everyone. The support of all individuals within the state is needed and vital for the control of noxious weeds within Nebraska. It is the duty of each person who owns land to effectively control noxious weeds on their land.

If you have questions or concerns about noxious weeds, please contact your local county noxious weed control authority or the Nebraska Department of Agriculture.



Material derived from *Weeds of the Great Plains*, published by the Nebraska Department of Agriculture.

For more information, visit nda.nebraska.gov.

COMMON REED (PHRAGMITES)



NEBRASKA NOXIOUS WEED

PREPARED BY THE
NEBRASKA DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
AND THE
NEBRASKA WEED CONTROL ASSOCIATION

COMMON REED FACTS

Common Name: Common reed (giant reed, canegrass)

Growth Form: Grass

Life Span: Perennial

Origin: Native and Europe

Season: Warm

Reproduction: Rhizomes, stolons, rarely by seeds

Height: 1–6 m (3.3–19.7 ft)

Inflorescences: Panicles (15–50 cm long, 5–20 cm wide), plumelike, much-branched; branches and top nodding at maturity; tan to purplish

Spikelets: Florets 3–8; lemmas sharply pointed (1.1–1.6 cm long), without hair, veins 3; lowest floret male; upper florets sterile; florets exceeded by the hairs of the rachilla

Awns: Fertile lemmas awned

Glumes: Unequal; first glume 3.6–6.2 mm long, veins 3; second glume 6.8–8.5 mm long, veins 3–5

Sheaths: Round, open, smooth, margins with fine hairs

Ligules: Ciliate membrane (1–3 mm long), backed by both short and long silky hairs

Blades: Flat (15–60 cm long, 1–6 cm wide), tapering to long-attenuate tips; margins serrate, without hair; upper surface ridge-veined, lower surface without hair or sparsely hairy

Culms: Erect to ascending, round (5–20 mm in diameter), robust, hollow, without hair

Rhizomes: Extensive (up to 10 m in length), stout (up to 2 cm in diameter), scaly

Stolons: Robust, may be 20 m long or more

Where Found: Throughout the Great Plains forming dense stands in wet and moderately fertile soils along banks of ponds, lakes, streams, marshes, roads, ditches and in wet fields. (NE, SD, ND, KS, OK, TX, MN, IA, MO, MT, WY, CO, NM, AB, SK & MB)

Uses and Values: It is readily eaten by cattle and horses when it is immature.

Historical: Pieces of the stems were used to make pen points in early America. Some Native Americans used common reed for thatching, mats, and arrow shafts.

Other: Characteristics of introduced common reed include a dense inflorescence; yellow, oval rhizomes; persistent leaf sheaths in fall; and tan, rough stems. Native common reed has a sparse inflorescence; white, round rhizomes; leaf sheaths that are easily detached in fall; and red to chestnut, smooth stems.

Identification between native and non-native common reed can be difficult at times. Contact your local county weed control superintendent for assistance.

IMPACT OF COMMON REED

Non-native common reed can be found throughout the state in stream and river channels, drainage ditches, and shores of lakes and ponds. While these are typical sites to find common reed, isolated infestations have been documented in drier sites.

The most serious infestations of common reed are found primarily in the Platte River basin. However, numerous isolated infestations are found in the Republican River basin.

A dense stand of common reed out-competes native plant communities and alters the conveyance of water by channelizing the river channels creating vegetated sandbars. Natural river flows are restricted, thus making the areas susceptible to flooding during high water events.



Panicles are plumelike, much-branched, densely flowered, and tan to purplish in color.

Mechanical and Cultural Control

Stands of common reed can be suppressed by mowing and/or grazing. Mowing reduces the plant's vigor, but continuous mowing is necessary to keep the stand in check. Mowing activities produce numerous small plant parts that are capable of resprouting, thus possibly increasing new shoots. This method should be used for short-term control until more effective methods can be applied. The use of cattle or goats has shown mixed results in containing dense stands of common reed. Vegetation should be grazed early in the growing season and continually grazed throughout the season. This method can suppress seed production as well as stressing root reserves of the plant. An intensive grazing program is a must and should be continued over several growing seasons.



Ligule is a ciliate membrane, backed by both short and long silky hairs.

CONTROLLING COMMON REED

Biological Control

Currently, there are not any approved biocontrol agents for the control of non-native common reed.

Common Reed Control Summary

A combination of two or more control methods is the best approach when controlling common reed. By utilizing several control options, your odds become greater that more common reed will be controlled. Common reed is capable of reproducing by seeds and root fragments. Existing infestations can spread vegetatively, not only by its extensive root system, but also by the plant's capability to send out extensive rhizomes that grow over 30 feet in length. Continued monitoring and follow-up control measures are essential for maintaining common reed infestations at an acceptable level. Vigilance is necessary to identify new infestations and effectively control them when the patches are small and there is a possibility of total control. A follow-up program is necessary for several growing seasons to control escaped plants and new seedlings.



Herbicide Control

The use of herbicides can be an effective tool to assist in controlling noxious weeds. A person needs to identify the problem and the appropriate herbicide for the plant as well as the site that the plant is growing. If the noxious weed infestation is severe and scattered across a large area, then a broadcast application may be warranted. However, if the noxious weeds are in patches or a few scattered plants here and there, a person may be able to spot treat individual plants or patches. This approach requires less herbicide and has minimal impact on native plants and the environment. Controlling noxious weeds with herbicides is only one tool and should never be the only control option.

Additional information regarding herbicide use can be found through the Nebraska Cooperative Extension EC130 (*Guide for Weed, Disease, and Insect Management in Nebraska*) or your local county weed control authority at neweed.org.