



Eurasian Phragmites

Phragmites australis subsp. *australis*

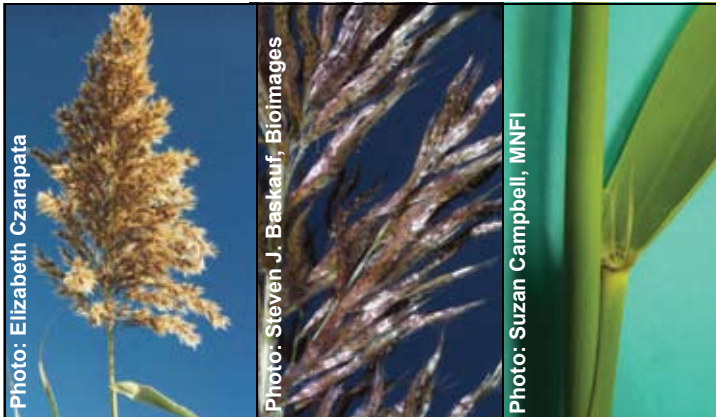


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Habit: Stout, warm-season perennial grass ranging in height from 1.8-3.9 m (6-13 ft); forms dense stands, in contrast with the native subspecies which occurs in a colony of scattered stems.

Leaves: Flat, smooth leaf blades; 25-50 cm (10-20 in) long, 1-3.5 cm (0.4-1.4 in) wide; hairy ligules; leaf sheaths stay attached after the stem senesces, in contrast with those of the native subspecies, which fall off easily.

Stems: Stems upright, rigid and hollow; dull yellowish; usually covered by the leaf sheath; the lower stems of the native subspecies are usually exposed, shiny and often reddish.

Flowers: Dense branched clusters on bearded axis at the end of each stem; becoming open and feathery at maturity.

Fruits/seeds: Seeds with white hairs below that are almost as long as the seed; prolific seeder.

Habitat: Found in wetlands, ditches, swales, stream and pond banks; tolerates road salt; responds rapidly to nutrient inputs.

Reproduction: Contrary to earlier beliefs, spreads easily and extensively by seed; also by an extensive, aggressive system of horizontal and vertical rhizomes that can live for 3-6 years.

Similar species: *Phragmites* is distinctive and much taller than most other grasses, particularly the non-native subspecies. Wild rice (*Zizania aquatica*), though quite tall, lacks the feathery appearance; large non-flowering plants of reed canarygrass (*Phalaris arundinacea*) appear similar but lack hairy ligules.

Comments: For references on distinguishing between native and exotic strains, check page 108 of the Online Resources section. This species has been listed as a restricted species under Michigan law; forms dense, impenetrable stands.

Monitoring & rapid response: Monitor wetlands, ditches and moist sites, particularly adjacent to areas which receive nutrient rich run-off or road salt. Burning, mowing, discing and digging may stimulate populations. Foliar herbicide treatment in late summer or fall provides effective control for large dense stands.

Permits may be required for herbicide use in water and wetlands. For information see MDEQ's Aquatic Nuisance Control website at:

www.michigan.gov/deqinlandlakes