



NATURAL
BIODIVERSITY
A Conservation Strategy

Impacts: Common reed invades a site by quickly taking over and crowding out native plants. It can also change the habitat and may increase the risk of fires. Dense stands block sunlight from other plants that grow underneath. It also takes over a space by turning into a monoculture very quickly.



Suspected Means of Introduction:

Common reed may have been carried in from remains left on European boats. Currently, it is contained mainly within 18 of the eastern states.

BioBullies

Common Reed

Phragmites australis



Description: Common reed is a tall perennial grass that can grow to over 15 feet in height. Common reed forms dense stands of both live and dead stems. The flattened leaves are 8 to 24 inches long and 1 to 1 1/2 inches wide. The blades are conspicuously nerved above and hairless or sparsely hairless beneath. Flowers of common reed are usually purple or golden in color and appear in late July through August. When the plant seeds and becomes mature, the flower looks “fluffy” at the top.

Native Range:
Eurasia

Resources for Identification and Control of Common Reed

Plant Invaders of
Mid-Atlantic Natural
Areas – National Park
Service and U.S. Fish and
Wildlife Service

Weed of the Week - USDA
Forest Service

Plant Profile Database -
USDA

Invasive.org
University of GA, US Forest
Service, USDA APHIS

PA Field Guide - Common
Invasive Plants in Riparian
Areas

Common Reed

Phragmites australis



Habitat: Common Reed grows in salt water and freshwater marshes, on river, lake and pond edges, along roadsides, and in other disturbed areas.

Biology: Common reed produces thousands of seeds per year. However viable seeds are rarely produced. Although reproduction by seed does occur, the most common means for populations to spread is through rhizome fragments which are sometimes washed downstream to new sites or dispersed along

roadsides. Viable seeds and rhizomes may also be transported by heavy machinery and equipment that is moved from one job site to another.

Control Methods: Common reed is most effectively controlled by herbicidal applications. Mechanical control, such as pulling and mowing, slows the growth of new plants, but does not kill them. When using herbicide, read the label and follow all state and federal regulations.