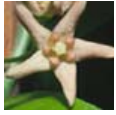




Invasive Plant Atlas of New England

Catalog of Species Search Results



[:: Catalog of Species Search](#)



Glyceria maxima

(Reed mannagrass
Reed sweetgrass)

[Common Name\(s\)](#) | [Full Scientific Name](#) | [Family Name Common](#) | [Family Scientific Name](#) | [Images](#) | [Synonyms](#) | [Description](#) | [Similar Species](#) | [Reproductive/Dispersal Mechanisms](#) | [Distribution](#) | [History of Introduction in New England](#) | [Habitats in New England](#) | [Threats](#) | [Early Warning Notes](#) | [Management Links](#) | [Documentation Needs](#) | [Additional Information](#) | [References](#) | [Data Retrieval](#) | [Maps of New England Plant Distribution](#)

COMMON NAME

Reed mannagrass
Reed sweetgrass

FULL SCIENTIFIC NAME

Glyceria maxima (Hartman) Holmb.

FAMILY NAME COMMON

Grass family

FAMILY SCIENTIFIC NAME

Poaceae

IMAGES



Habit



Inflorescence

NOMENCLATURE/SYNONYMS

Synonyms: *Glyceria spectabilis* Mert. & Koch
Molinia maxima Hartman

Poa aquatica L.

DESCRIPTION

Botanical Glossary

Glyceria maxima is a rhizomatous perennial that grows from unbranched stems that can reach 2.5 m (8.25 ft.) in height. The leaf blades are flat or slightly folded and are 2 cm (0.75 in.) wide and 22-29 cm (8-12 in.) long. The blades are shallowly grooved and have prominent mid-ribs. The apex of the leaf is acute, and the leaf margins have stiff, short hairs. The leaf sheaths are rough in texture and have a reddish-brown band at the junction with the leaf. The ligule is about 5 mm (0.2 in.) long and obtuse at the apex.

The inflorescence of *Glyceria maxima* is in an open panicle, the branches of which have short, stiff hairs similar to those that are on the leaf margins. The panicle measures 15-30 cm (6-12 in.) in length. The spikelets are 5-8 mm (0.2-0.3 in.) long. The glumes are keeled in shape. The ovate, obtuse lemma is 3 mm (0.1 in.) in length; the palea is about equal in size to the lemma, ovate and obtuse in shape and very slightly two-cleft. The small seeds are 1.5-2 mm (0.07 in.) long, obovoid in shape and smooth in texture. They are dark brown and have a deep and narrow central furrow. Flowers appear on this plant from June to August.

Page References Crow & Hellquist 271, Magee & Ahles 176. See reference section below for full citations.

SIMILAR SPECIES

Glyceria grandis S. Wats. (American mannagrass)

Characters	<i>Glyceria maxima</i>	<i>Glyceria grandis</i>
Mature Height	Up to 2.5 m	Up to 1.5 m
Panicles	Erect branches with rough sheaths	Nodding branches with smooth sheaths
Glumes	2 - 3 mm	1.2 - 1.5 mm

REPRODUCTIVE/DISPERSAL MECHANISMS

In North America, *Glyceria maxima* appears to reproduce and spread primarily by means of rhizomes. The extent to which it is able to reproduce and spread by seed is not clear, though evidence suggests that only a small percentage of its florets set viable seed.

DISTRIBUTION

Glyceria maxima is native to northern Eurasia, from the British Isles to Japan and Kamchatka. In North America, it is found in southern Canada, primarily in Ontario, but also in Newfoundland, British Columbia, Wisconsin and Massachusetts.

HISTORY OF INTRODUCTION IN NEW ENGLAND

The first specimen of *Glyceria maxima* in North America dates from 1940 and comes from a marsh at the edge of Lake Ontario. Between 1940 and 1952 several more populations of the plant were located in this same region. It is possible that *Glyceria maxima* arrived some time before these records were documented. It may have been introduced intentionally as a forage species, or accidentally as part of packing material. The first record of *Glyceria maxima* in New England comes from the Ipswich River Wildlife Sanctuary in Essex County, Massachusetts in 1990. This Massachusetts population appears to be under control, and has provided some initial insights into how the species can be held in check.

HABITATS IN NEW ENGLAND

Herbaceous Wetland
Shrub Wetland

At present, *Glyceria maxima* is only found at one site in New England - the Ipswich River marsh system in Essex county, Massachusetts. It clearly favors freshwater wetland habitats.

THREATS

Glyceria maxima forms large, dense monospecific stands capable of crowding out native wetland vegetation. Because it is both a poor food source and a poor nesting substrate for wetland wildlife, it has significant potential to negatively affect wetland habitat dynamics.

MANAGEMENT LINKS

[The Nature Conservancy](#)

DOCUMENTATION NEEDS

[Documentation required](#): Herbarium specimen or mounted snippet of the plants with inflorescence.

[Best time for documentation](#): Summer, fall.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

[Integrated Taxonomic Information System](#)

Taxonomic information about the species

[The PLANTS database](#)

General information and map

[The Nature Conservancy](#)

Description, pictures and control information

[Sea Grant Nonindigenous Species Site](#)

Brief article about the history of this species

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DATA RETRIEVAL

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MAPS OF PLANT DISTRIBUTION IN NEW ENGLAND

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- The whole New England area
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- One or more counties
- One or more towns (county sub-divisions)

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