

Invasive Plants of the Eastern United States

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Swearingen, J., K. Reshetiloff, B. Slattery, and S. Zwicker. 2002. Plant Invaders of Mid-Atlantic Natural Areas. National Park Service and U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, 82 pp.



Joseph McCauley, USFWS

Common Reed

Phragmites australis

Common reed is a tall grass that inhabits wet areas like brackish and freshwater marshes, riverbanks, lakeshores, ditches and dredge spoil areas. Native and introduced forms of *Phragmites* occur in the United States.

Researchers believe that introduced European forms are the aggressive invasives that have replaced much of our native reed. Common reed threatens by displacing native plants and forming monocultures in otherwise biologically diverse natural wetlands. It spreads by seed and strong vegetative growth and is very

difficult to control once established.

Prevention and Control

Control of *Phragmites* is difficult, time-consuming, labor intensive and costly. Cutting, burning and chemical herbicides are all used to control it under various circumstances. Researchers have recently begun investigating the potential for biological control of this plant.

Native Alternatives

After controlling *Phragmites*, replant area with native wetland plants suitable to the site's salinity and wetness. Contact federal or state natural resource agencies for assistance in selecting and locating native alternatives. Refer to [References](#).

[[Home](#)] [[Contents](#)]



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