

Giant Reed



Giant reed (*Arundo donax* L.) is a cane that grows up to 20 feet (6 m) in height from spreading tuberous rhizomes and forms thickets in distinct clumps. It has cornlike gray-green and hairless leaves jutting alternately from stems and drooping at the ends. Erect plumelike terminal panicles of flowers and seed heads appear in late summer and persist through winter. Seed are not viable. Dried plants remain standing in winter and spring while low and sheltered plants may remain green. Species spreads by movement of stem and rhizome parts in soil or by road-shoulder mowing and grading and by running water. Each stem and rhizome section has a viable bud. Only an invasive problem in local infestations, while projected widespread plantings for biomass and biofuels could result in severe problems. Closely resembles common reed [*Phragmites australis* (Cav.) Trin. ex Steud.], which has similar large hairy seed heads, but not erect and fanned in a loose plume and which occurs mainly near swamps, marshes, and wet habitats in extensive infestations.

Management strategies:

- Oppose widespread planting of this species for fiber or fuels.
- Do not plant. Remove prior plantings, and control sprouts. Bag and dispose of plants in a dumpster or burn.
- Frequent repeated cutting to groundline may result in control.
- Burning treatments are suspected of having minimal effect due to underground rhizomes.

Recommended control procedures:

- Thoroughly wet all leaves with one of the following herbicides in water with a surfactant (September or October with multiple applications to regrowth): when safety to surrounding plants is desired, a glyphosate herbicide as a 4-percent solution (1 pint per 3-gallon mix) directed at this plant and away from surrounding plants; Arsenal AC* as a 1-percent solution (4 ounces per 3-gallon mix); or a combination of the two herbicides; Arsenal AC* as a 0.5-percent solution (2 ounces per 3-gallon mix) and a glyphosate herbicide as a 4-percent solution (1 pint per 3-gallon mix).

* Nontarget plants may be killed or injured by root uptake.