



# Phragmites

Bayer Solutions

## // THE PROBLEM

Phragmites (*Phragmites australis*), also known as common reed, is a perennial grass that can be found in every Canadian province and the Northwest Territories in both aquatic and nonaquatic environments. Phragmites is a large grass and can grow up to heights of 5 metres tall. In non-aquatic environments, including roadsides, ditches and rights-of-way, phragmites can pose road safety hazards through reducing driving sightlines and increasing the risk of vehicle or animal collisions. Additionally, it crowds our native vegetation, reducing plant biodiversity and destroying beneficial native vegetation and wildlife habitat. Phragmites is an aggressive grower, can spread rapidly and can quickly colonize, resulting in dense stands that can quickly become fire hazards because of the high percentage of dead stalks.

## // INVASIVE PHRAGMITES IDENTIFICATION

Identifying non-native phragmites can be difficult because of closely related native subspecies that can be native to certain parts of Canada. Invasive phragmites can be most commonly identified by their leaves, which appear blue-green in colour and are generally wider than 1 centimetre, growing in sheaths around the stem.

Additionally, while native phragmites generally does not grow as tall as invasive phragmites, there are a number of other characteristics that can be evaluated to help identify invasive phragmites.

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Controlling invasive phragmites before it becomes well established is essential to reducing the environmental impact of this invasive plant and protecting native plant species and wildlife habitat. Once the existence of the plant in an area has been confirmed, the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources (OMNR) recommends that a control plan should be developed and implemented in a timely fashion following best management practices (BMPs). Invasive phragmites has an extensive underground rhizome system, therefore the use of a single control measure may not always be effective, as disturbance to an area may actually increase the density and spread of an invasive phragmites stand.

The OMNR also recognizes the need for an integrated pest management (IPM) plan, which comprises two or more methods, and these long-term plans should be created in a site-specific manner.

Control options include those by mechanical means, such as mowing, rolling or compressing stalks. Prescribed burning can also be utilized as part of a control program and is generally recommended only after a herbicide application takes place. In order to fully eradicate invasive phragmites, the use of herbicides can be the best method to provide complete control and eradication and fully control invasive phragmites while minimizing the effects of mechanical or burning control methods.

Application Type	Native phragmites	Invasive phragmites
Stand height	2 metres	Up to 5 metres
Stand density	Sparse, interspersed with native vegetation	Dense monoculture, up to 100% invasive phragmites
Stem colour	Reddish-brown	Beige, tan
Stem texture	Smooth and shiny	Rough and dull
Stem flexibility	High flexibility	Rigid
Leaf colour	Yellow-green	Blue-green
Leaf sheaths	Fall off in fall, easily removed	Remain attached, difficult to remove
Flower timing	Early (July-August)	Intermediate (August-September)
Seedhead density	Sparse, small	Dense, large

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Roundup WeatherPRO® is a water-soluble herbicide for non-selective weed control of common reed (*Phragmites australis*). Always read and follow the label for best control of common reed. For partial control and for best results, treat in late summer or early fall when plants are actively growing and in full bloom. Treatment before or after this stage may lead to reduced control. Use the following chart for application instructions and rates.

Weed	Application			Comments
	Groth Stage	Rate (L/ha)	Water Volume (L/ha)	
Common reed	Apply when actively growing, or to regrowth after burning or mowing.	2.0 – 8.0	100-500	<p>Due to the dense nature of the vegetation, which may prevent good spray coverage, or uneven stages of growth, repeat treatments may be necessary to maintain control. Visual control symptoms will be slow to develop.</p> <p>For higher volumes (i.e., 150-300 L/ha) an approved surfactant should be added at 0.5 L per 100 L of clean water (0.5% v/v).</p> <p>DO NOT TREAT PLANTS OVER OPEN WATER. Roundup WeatherPRO is not registered for direct application to bodies of water.</p>

### Source(s)

\*\* Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources, Invasive Phragmites – Best Management Practices, Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources, Peterborough, Ontario. Version 2011. 17p



Invasive phragmites (left), and Native phragmites (right).



Eastern Canada:  
Will Roberts  
226.821.5845  
will.roberts@bayer.com

Northern Alberta/British Columbia:  
Darrell Chambers  
403.498.7006  
darrell.chambers@bayer.com

Southern Alberta/Saskatchewan:  
Megan Coverdale  
587.434.3411  
megan.coverdale@bayer.com

Québec:  
Normand Drapeau  
514.949.2467  
normand.drapeau@bayer.com

es.bayer.ca 1-888-283-6847  @BayerGolfCA