

COMMON REED

Phragmites australis



CONTROL

Hand Pulling

This plant does not pull well due to robust rhizomes and root fragments that are easily left behind. If pulled, then it is best to control individual plants or small pioneering stands. Early fall is optimal for digging, be sure to cut and bag seed heads before they seed (mid-summer). Limit erosion while hand pulling near shorelines. The rhizome layer can be up to 6 ft in depth making removal with hand tools too labor intensive for efficient results.

Mowing

Cutting and mowing Phragmites that has been treated with herbicide during late summer to fall, or in winter when the ground is frozen has been shown to be effective. Cutting without herbicide use should be done in late July (growth towards stalk and roots), and no other time as it may stimulate growth. Cut stems should be bagged and removed to allow sunlight to promote native seed germination. Do not compost plant material.

Biological control

There are currently no known biological control agents in the state of Montana for controlling Phragmites.

Grazing

Rotational goat grazing shows potential in reducing Phragmites populations. Cows and horses have also been

Ideal Timing for Treatment Options

Spring	Summer	Fall	Winter
		Hand Pulling	
	Mowing/Cutting		
Grazing			
	Foliar Spray		

shown to eat this plant in a sustainable control method rather than complete eradication.

Herbicide

There are a number of herbicides that are effective in suppressing Phragmites; be sure to use aquatic herbicides with an approved surfactant to reduce the risk of drift. The herbicide chart on the back lists approved controls for common reed. Always consult product labels and read them carefully to ensure correct species/land management usage and chemical application.



NOTE: Common reed is difficult to distinguish from its native relative *Phragmites australis* ssp. *americanus*, which is common in Montana.

Common Reed Life Cycle

Life Cycle	Root	Leaves	Stems	Flower	Seed/Fruit
Perennial	Scaly rhizomes and stolons	Flat blades $\frac{3}{4}$ to $1\frac{1}{2}$ inches wide. Lower leaf sheaths tightly attached. Membranous ligule where leaf blade attaches to stem.	6-12 feet but up to 20 feet tall, dull and rough with small ridges. When leaf sheaths are removed, green or tan stems are visible, not reddish except at nodes.	Plume or feather-like inflorescence that is green, purple, or golden and 6-20 inches long; upper glume (bract at base of grass spikelet) $\frac{1}{4}$ inch, lower glume less than $\frac{1}{4}$ inch.	Small, up to 1/10 long.

Herbicides for Common Reed, *Phragmites australis*

Active Ingredient	Rate	Efficacy	Comments
Glyphosate	1.5-3.3 quarts/acre	Late summer, full growth	This is a nonselective herbicide; care must be taken to avoid application onto non-target and native species. Apply to actively growing plants at full to late flowering stage. Use a surfactant.
Imazapyr	2-4 pints/acre	Early to Late summer (June-Sept)	This is a nonselective herbicide; care must be taken to avoid application onto non-target and native species. Apply to actively growing plants at full to late flowering stage. Habitat is labelled for aquatic use. Use a surfactant.
Imazapyr + glyphosate	1.5 qt. + 1.5 qt /acre	Late summer, full growth	This is a nonselective herbicide; care must be taken to avoid application onto non-target and native species. Apply to actively growing plants at full to late flowering stage.

Information on diagnostic identifying characteristics adapted from "Montana's Noxious Weeds" by Pokorny and Mangold, Montana State University Extension Bulletin EB0159.