INVASIVE PLANT SPECIES FACT SHEET

IPSAWG
Invasive Plant Species Assessment Working Group

Reed Canarygrass

Phalaris arundinacea

Pictures By (From top to bottom): C. Evans, M Shephard and M. Shephard @ www.invasive.org.

Invasive Plants are a Threat to:

- **Forests and wetlands**
- **Native plants**
- **Perennial gardens**
- **Wildlife**
- **Lakes and rivers**
- **Human health**
- **Farmland**

Date Prepared: 05/07

Description:

Reed canarygrass is a cool-season, sod-forming perennial grass that produces stems from creeping rhizomes. The stems grow between 2 to 6 ft. tall. The leaf blades are flat and up to 0.75 in. wide and 1.5 ft. long. The flowers are in dense, branched panicles that can exceed 8 in. in length. Immature panicles are compact and resemble spikes, but open at anthesis. Most contain three florets, two of which are infertile. The lemma in the infertile florets is approx. 0.04 in. long and in the fertile floret is approx. 0.12-0.18 in. long. The glumes are compressed and wingless.

Distribution:

Reed canarygrass is found in wet meadows, wetlands, marshes, fens, old fields, floodplains, wet prairies, roadsides, ditchbanks, streambanks, lake-shores and shore swales. Any moist, fertile, semi-open to open habitat provides good conditions for this species. Reed canarygrass is found in every county in Indiana and invades most wetland community types in the state.

Problem:

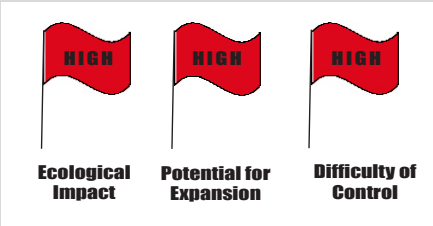
Reed canarygrass forms dense, persistent, monotypic stands in wetlands, moist meadows, and riparian areas. These stands exclude and displace desirable native plants and animals. It constricts waterways and irrigation canals by promoting silt deposition. Conversely, it promotes further erosion of soil when located on edges of incised watercourses by causing cutaways beneath the dense mats of rhizomes. For humans, it can aggravate allergies by producing abundant pollen.

Origin:

Reed canarygrass is believed to be native to Europe. However, some authors believe it to be native to Asia and North America as well. The present day range of reed canarygrass extends throughout the Old and New Worlds, where it is found primarily in northern latitudes.

Picture By: Michael Shephard @ www.invasive.org.

IPSAWG Ranking:



IPSAWG Recommendation:

• Do not buy, sell or plant reed canarygrass for erosion control, wildlife habitat or landscaping in Indiana.

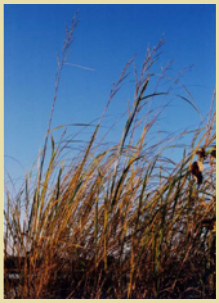
• Only use for forage in cases where extended flooding precludes using other species; do not allow seed to form on plants.

This ranking illustrates the results of an assessment conducted by the **Invasive Plant Species Assessment Working Group** (IPSAWG), which is made up of many organizations and agencies concerned about invasive plant species. IPSAWG's goal is to assess which plant species may threaten natural areas in Indiana and develop recommendations to reduce their use in the state.

For more information about IPSAWG and the assessment tool used to rank invasive species, visit their website:

www.invasivespecies.IN.gov

ALTERNATIVES to reed canarygrass:



Prairie cord grass
(*Spartina pectinata)*

Blue joint grass
(*Calamagrostis canadensis*)

Tussock sedge
(*Carex stricta*)

Switch grass
(*Panicum virgatum*)

Pictures By (Top to Bottom): J. Anderson, www.nps.gov, G. Fewless and T. Bodner @ USDA - NRCS Plants Database.

Control Methods:

Many practices can be used to control reed canarygrass (RCG). Most work best when used together. Burning can be used to reduce RCG in late spring after it is active but before natives break dormancy. Before burning, mowing or herbicide application is often used to prepare the site. Herbicide can also be used after a burn when active growth resumes (when RCG is 6-12" tall). Use glyphosate on sites without native plants prior to reseeding. Ensure that any herbicide products are labeled for use in wetlands to avoid potential adverse impacts to aquatic life, such as frogs and salamanders. Use a grass specific herbicide like sethoxydim or fluazifop on sites with desirable native, non-grass species. If herbicide is used alone, it should be used in late summer for maximum translocation to roots. Mowing or tilling is often used before herbicide. Mowing can be used to stress RCG. Mowing should occur before seed heads appear and works best in combination with other practices. Altering a site's hydrology is another effective control if the new water depth is greater than 12" and high water level can be maintained through the growing season. This prevents seed germination and kills the rhizomes. Special permits may be required for this treatment and effects vary. **Always read and follow pesticide label directions.**

Eight Easy Ways to Combat Invasive Plants

You can **help stop** the spread of **invasive plants** by following these **8 easy guidelines**:

1. Ask for only non-invasive species when you acquire plants. Request that nurseries and garden centers sell only non-invasive plants.
2. Seek information on invasive plants. Sources include botanical gardens, horticulturists, conservationists, and government agencies.
3. Scout your property for invasive species, and remove invasives before they become a problem. If plants can't be removed, at least prevent them from going to seed.
4. Clean your boots before and after visiting a natural area to prevent the spread of invasive plant seeds.
5. Don't release aquarium plants into the wild.
6. Volunteer at local parks and natural areas to assist ongoing efforts to diminish the threat of invasive plants.
7. Help educate your community through personal contacts and in such settings as garden clubs and civic groups.
8. Support public policies and programs to control invasive plants.

For More Information:

On this assessment and IPSAWG:

IPSAWG
www.invasivespecies.IN.gov

On identification and control techniques:

The Nature Conservancy's Wildland Weeds
www.tncweeds.ucdavis.edu

On native plant alternatives and sources:

Indiana Native Plant and Wildflower Society
www.inpaws.org

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