

Know Your Nebraska Noxious Weeds

PHRAGMITES / COMMON REED *Phragmites australis* (Cav.) Trin. Ex Steud.

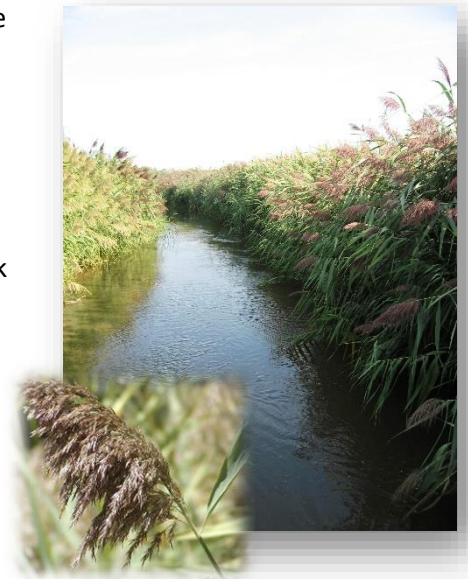
Over generations both the rate of introduction and spread of noxious weeds have increased significantly. This change is mainly due to an increase in human travel, expanding commerce through trade, and a lack of knowledge of how weeds are spread. By becoming educated about noxious weeds, you're doing your part to help stop their spread and protect the environment.

What is the threat?

If noxious weeds are left uncontrolled, the Nebraska that we enjoy today will look much different for future generations. Do your part, become educated and help stop the spread of noxious weeds.

How did nonnative phragmites get here?

[Nonnative phragmites](#) is native to Europe. It was first introduced in North America in the late 1800s. Nonnative phragmites was declared a noxious weed in Nebraska in 2008. [Click for an interactive 360-degree video on phragmites.](#)



What does nonnative phragmites look like?

It is important to be able to distinguish [native from nonnative phragmites](#). There are several characteristics that can be used to correctly identify each species. Stem texture and color, leaf sheaths adhered to the culms or not, plant color, presence of small black dots and stem density should all be considered.

What is the impact of doing nothing?

Nonnative phragmites negatively impacts the native riparian and wetland habitats, resulting in reduced productivity of native plants and loss of biodiversity. Loss of native habitat and wildlife effects the social and economic well-being of local communities. The thick biomass will increase the risk of flooding along waterways. Because of its aggressive nature, not only is your property at risk but nonnative phragmites will spread to neighboring properties as well.

Is nonnative phragmites good for anything?

Nonnative phragmites is readily eaten by cattle and horses when it is immature.

How does nonnative phragmites spread?

The predominant means of [spreading nonnative phragmites](#) is through rhizomes and stolons along with seed dispersal. Wind, water, birds, animals, machinery, and humans all contribute to the rapid spread of phragmites.

How can I control nonnative phragmites?

Controlling small infestations is more effective and less expensive.

Options for [nonnative phragmites](#) control include:

Mechanical – Includes disking, mowing, burning, draining, flooding, grazing, and digging. Mechanical methods used alone are unlikely to kill the plants.

Herbicide – Approved aquatic herbicides are effective in managing nonnative phragmites.

Biological – 26 species of herbivores are known to feed on phragmites. Only a few feed strictly on the nonnative variety of phragmites, including the rhizome-feeding noctuid moth.

What is a Noxious Weed?

A noxious weed is a nonnative plant, which is known to be invasive and can be directly poisonous to man, livestock, and wildlife. Noxious weeds compete with crops, rangeland and pastures reducing yields substantially.

It is the duty of each person who owns or controls land in Nebraska to effectively control noxious weeds on his/her property. For more information about Nebraska's Noxious Weeds contact your local [Weed Control Superintendent](#)