

Phragmites australis

COMMON NAME

phragmites

FAMILY

Poaceae

AUTHORITY

Phragmites australis (Cav.) Trin. exSteud.

FLORA CATEGORY

Vascular – Exotic

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Grasses

NVS CODE

PHRAUS

CONSERVATION STATUS

Not applicable

BRIEF DESCRIPTION

Large (commonly 3 m tall) forming dense beds on the edges of water bodies. Bamboo-like with tall canes but these are not woody and die off over winter. Flower heads flange feathery, somewhat like pampas flowers.

DISTRIBUTION

Locally naturalised Hawke's Bay, Tasman, Canterbury, all known sites targeted for eradication.

HABITAT

Still and slow flowing water bodies, wetlands and reported from salt marshes overseas.

WETLAND PLANT INDICATOR STATUS RATING

OBL: Obligate Wetland

Almost always is a hydrophyte, rarely in uplands (non-wetlands).

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Robust summer green grass, growing to 3 m or more tall, with stout far-reaching rhizomes. **Stalks** are leafy, rigid, erect, bamboo-like, with many nodes. **Leaves** bluish-green, up to 60 cm long and 3 cm wide, often aligning in one direction when older. **Flower** head is purplish, silky, and almost up to 40 cm long.

SIMILAR TAXA

Giant reed (*Arundo donax*) and bamboos. Giant reed is taller with arching stems. Bamboos have stalked leaves rather than leaves that attach directly to the stalk in the case of phragmites.

FLOWERING

Summer

FLOWER COLOURS

Green, White

FRUITING

Not known to fruit in New Zealand

LIFE CYCLE

Spreads by rhizomes and stem fragments, possibly by mowers. Also deliberate plantings.

YEAR NATURALISED

1950.



ORIGIN

Native range includes every continent except Antarctica, but not native in New Zealand.

REASON FOR INTRODUCTION

Ornamental pond and garden plant.

CONTROL TECHNIQUES

Notify Ministry for Primary Industries if found.

ETYMOLOGY

australis: Southern

NATIONAL PEST PLANT ACCORD SPECIES

This plant is listed in the 2020 National Pest Plant Accord. The National Pest Plant Accord (NPPA) is an agreement to prevent the sale and/or distribution of specified pest plants where either formal or casual horticultural trade is the most significant way of spreading the plant in New Zealand. For up to date information and an electronic copy of the 2020 Pest Plant Accord manual (including plant information and images) visit the [MPI website](#).

ATTRIBUTION

Factsheet prepared by Paul Champion and Deborah Hofstra (NIWA).

REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

Champion P. et al. 2020. Freshwater Invasive Species of New Zealand 2020. NIWA publication.

<https://docs.niwa.co.nz/library/public/FreInSpec.pdf>

Connor HE, Dawson MI, Keating RD, Gill LS. 1998. Chromosome numbers of *Phragmites australis* (Arundineae: Gramineae) in New Zealand. *NZ Journal of Botany* 36(3): 465-469. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0028825X.1998.9512584>

MORE INFORMATION

<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/phragmites-australis/>