



903 N. Black Avenue
Bozeman, MT 59715
(406) 582-3265

COMMON REED (PHRAGMITES) MANAGEMENT TIPS

Common reed is a perennial grass (family Poaceae) that forms dense mats of stolons and rhizomes and typically grows between six and 15+ feet tall. Common reed was added to the Montana Noxious Weed List in 2015. This plant has two forms, one endemic to North America and the other invasive. The endemic and invasive forms are difficult to tell apart, so be sure of identification before initiating control measures. Common reed grows in wetland areas including marshes, sloughs, ditches and riparian corridors. Common reed is capable of forming large dense monocultures which negatively affect wildlife habitat, increase sedimentation, and alter wetland hydrology. Reproduction is primarily vegetative through rhizomes, stolons and seed. Seed bank longevity is short-lived.



Flower head of common reed.

Management and control efforts must be planned for several consecutive growing seasons in order to monitor for and treat any new plants that emerge from rhizomes or stolons.

Prevention is the number one management strategy for this plant. Common reed is not known to be present in Gallatin County. If you think you have found this plant, please contact your local county Weed District.

Effective control measures for the management of common reed include:

1. **Mechanical:** Hand pulling is not effective due to extensive rhizomes. Mowing and burning alone usually result in increased regrowth from rhizomes and can lead to a thicker stand.
2. **Herbicide: Always follow directions on the label. The label is the law!** Calibrate your equipment to ensure that you are adding the proper amount of herbicide to your tank. The following herbicides are commonly used to control common reed. *For the most effective control, apply herbicides when the plant is actively growing with green foliage after full leaf elongation and ensure 100% coverage.*

Mixing rates in small backpack or hand sprayers are as follows:

Glyphosate with Aquatic label: 2.5 ounces herbicide per gallon of water.
Habitat: 3 ounces herbicide per gallon of water.

Rates in large sprayers are as follows:

Glyphosate with Aquatic label: 2% solution.
Habitat: 4 – 6 pints per acre.

Glyphosate and Habitat are non-selective herbicides and will severely injure or kill all plants- only apply to the target species.

NOTE: Adding a surfactant with an aquatic label to your tank may enhance the performance of your herbicide and is required for certain herbicides (read the label). Add 0.5 - 1 oz. per gallon of water for backpack sprayers or 1 – 2 pints per 100 gallons for large sprayers.

3. **Cultural (competition & revegetation):** Proper vegetation and soil management is the best way to prevent common reed invasion. On heavily infested sites, revegetation may be necessary following herbicide treatment.
4. **Integrated management:** Control of common reed is most effective if multiple strategies are used. Mowing or burning usually only result in increased growth from the rhizomes, but when combined with herbicide applications they can be effective. Mow or burn the stand and wait until regrowth reaches about 5 feet, then treat with herbicide. The key to controlling this plant is diminishing the energy reserves in the extensive root system. This will take multiple years of aggressive treatment.