



GIANT REED

Arundo donax L. (Poaceae)

Common names: giant reed, bamboo reed, giant cane, Spanish reed, wild cane

Giant reed is an invasive plant that dominates moist, well-drained soils along ditches, rivers, lakes and floodplains.

Why it's a problem

Giant reed uses excessive resources and crowds out native plant species while providing little food or habitat to native birds, animals and insects.

What it looks like

Giant reed is a perennial grass with strong rootstalks and erect stems (2-10 m). Leaves are blue-green (30-100 cm) and alternately arranged in two vertical rows on opposite sides of the stalk. The seed heads are long and plume-like (30-65 cm).

Variegated giant reed has white and green-striped leaves and is shorter (1-5 m) than the 'wild' form.

Where it's found

Giant reed is native to warm temperate and subtropical areas of Asia. It uses large amounts of water and is commonly found along stream banks, flood plains, drainages and irrigation waterways. However, it can tolerate a range of conditions and can be found in agricultural areas, forests, grasslands, scrublands, coastlands, deserts and roadsides. It has been cultivated worldwide and has naturalized in

countries of Africa, Europe, North and South America and Oceania.

Giant reed has not been reported in natural ecosystems in Canada and is only present in cultivation.

As of February 1, 2018, it is no longer legal to provide, sell or domestically move giant reed in Canada. Known sites are under official control for eradication. People with giant reed in their possession or on their property are encouraged to contact the CFIA to determine the safest way to dispose of it.

How it spreads

Intentional planting is a key factor in the spread of giant reed. This plant can also be dispersed along waterways by storms, floods, machinery, boats, construction activities, and the moving and dumping of soil or garden waste. These events spread plant fragments and cause new colonies to form downstream.

How to get rid of it

Eradication requires the destruction of stems and rhizomes. Using a variety of methods may be more successful than a single method. Small infestations can be hand pulled or dug out, or plants can be cut and the stumps covered in a strong, dark

impermeable tarp until rhizomes are dead. Excavators or backhoes can dig out larger infestations. It is critical that all re-growth be re-treated and that plant material be disposed of appropriately. Disposal methods include deep burial or incineration. Eradication is successful when there is no giant reed regrowth for two consecutive years.

Regulations

Giant reed is regulated as a pest under the *Plant Protection Act*. The importation, use and movement of live giant reed plants and/or its plant parts is prohibited in Canada.

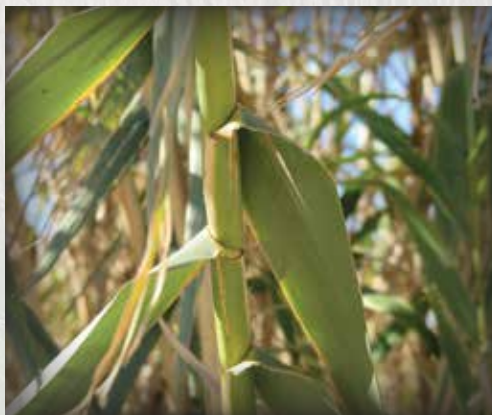
What you can do about it

- Avoid distributing or planting invasive plants in your garden.
- Before importing any plant or plant part, check with the CFIA to learn if there are any regulations or conditions associated with it. Use the Automated Import Reference System or contact your local CFIA office. Canada's regulations apply to seeds, plants and plant parts however they are sold: online, by mail or in store.
- Contact your local CFIA office if you think you have found giant reed or other regulated invasive plants. The CFIA will follow-up to determine if further action is needed.



Giant reed flower head.

Photo credit: A. Blain, Canadian Food Inspection Agency



Giant reed stem and leaves.

Photo credit: A. Blain, Canadian Food Inspection Agency



Giant reed stems, leaves and sheaths.

Photo credit: S. Darbyshire, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada

Invasive plants are plant species that can be harmful when introduced into new areas. These species can invade agricultural and natural areas, causing serious damage to Canada's economy and environment. To find out more, visit www.inspection.gc.ca/invasive or contact CFIA's Invasive Alien Species program at cfia.ias-eee.acia@canada.ca.