

Giant Reed Fact Sheet

Arundo donax

Poaceae Family



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Distinguishing Features:

- ❶ **Flowers:** Flowers are up to 2-foot-tall plumes. They are tan in color and resemble large hand-held fans or feathers.
- ❷ **Seeds:** Seeds are rarely present outside of the plants' natural range. When they are present, they are usually infertile. It mainly reproduces asexually via an extensive rhizomatous root system.
- ❸ **Leaves:** Leaves are long, flat and grow up to 1.5 ft. (0.5 m) long. They can be green or have variegated green and white stripes the length of the blade.
- ❹ **Flowering Time:** Flowery plumes develop in late summer and persist into early fall.
- ❺ **Life cycle:** Giant Reed begins growing in late spring and continuing throughout the summer. It flowers in late summer and continues through the first fall frost when it dies off.

Impacts:

- Giant Reed grows extremely quickly and can easily choke out any native flora in its vicinity.
- Giant Reed uses a lot of water and chokes river channels, reducing habitat for many native animals.
- Giant Reed's thick root mats can form around infrastructure such as dams and culverts leading to blockage and damage.

Control:

- Hand-pulling is effective with new plants, but care must be taken to remove all rhizome material. Stems and roots should be removed to prevent re-rooting.
- Grazing can be effective in the control of Giant Reed. There are currently no traditional biocontrol agents approved for use in the US, although several insect species are currently being researched for the role.
- Systemic herbicides such as Glyphosate (MSSU) can be used to control Giant Reed, although repeated application is needed to achieve complete control.



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