

Reed canarygrass

Phalaris arundinacea

Description

Reed canarygrass is a cool-season grass; the invasive character of some *Phalaris* populations may be the result of agronomic breeding for vigorous growth and drought tolerance.

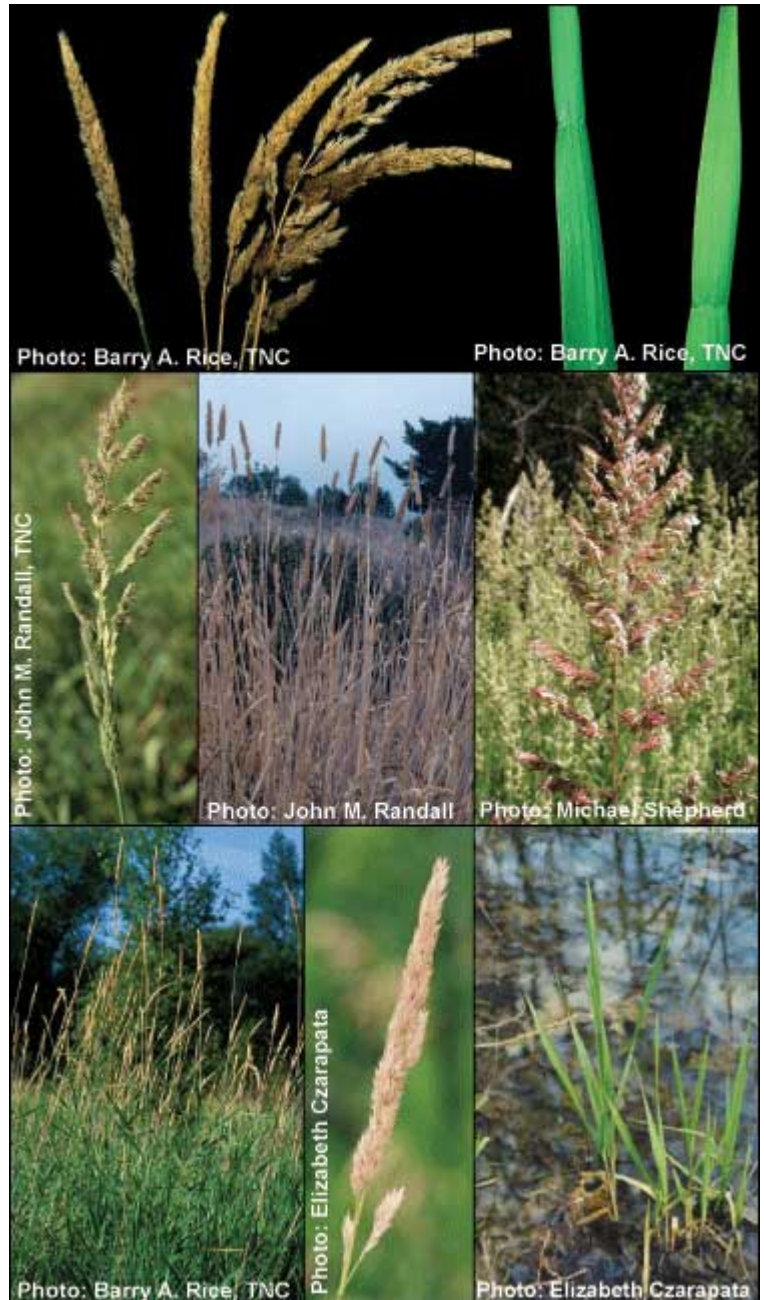
Habit

Cool-season, colonial, perennial grass ranging from 0.7-2.4 m (2.5-8 ft) tall; forms dense monotypic stands; root system is a thick, fibrous mat of rhizomes.

Leaves

Flat, rough leaf blades, 1.9-2.6 cm (0.75-1 in) wide and up to 45 cm (1.5 ft) long, prominent transparent ligule.

Stems





Upright; bluish-green in color.

Flowers

Found in crowded, branched clusters at the end of each stem; young clusters dense and spike-like, expanding at maturity.

Fruits and Seeds

Small, shiny brown seeds; dispersed by water, humans, animals and machinery.

Habitat

Native to North America and Europe; most Midwestern colonies thought to be escapes of cultivated and European forms; widely planted for erosion control, now found in wetlands, ditches, stream and pond banks, and wet meadows.

Reproduction

Primarily through dense, mat-forming, spreading rhizomes; also by seed.

Similar

Native blue joint grass (*Calamagrostis canadensis*) occurs in similar sites but is draping rather than upright.

Monitoring and Rapid Response

Monitor moist, fertile sites and wetlands; most visible in spring when inflorescences expand to facilitate pollination. Herbicide application in late summer or fall provides the most effective control, particularly for large populations; reseeding with desired plant species beneficial; burning, mowing, discing and plowing must be ongoing as root fragments resprout, one-time efforts may increase population;

Monitoring and follow-up required for 5-10 years until seed bank is exhausted. This species is extremely difficult to eradicate, research control options thoroughly. Permits are usually required for herbicide use in water bodies and wetlands. For information see MDEQs Aquatic Nuisance Control website at: www.michigan.gov/deqinlandlakes.

Credits

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