

INVASIVE PHRAGMITES

Species Overview

Non-Native Phragmites is an invasive perennial wetland grass species. It easily establishes and spreads along shorelines and in wetlands. It is also known as non-native phragmites, or common reed.

Ecological Threat

- Aggressively invades lakeshores and wetlands
- Spreads by seed and underground roots (rhizomes)
- Outcompetes native vegetation, forming dense monocultures
- Blocks viewing corridors
- Impedes lake access
- Affects property values
- May pose a significant fire risk

Distribution

Phragmites is considered a prohibited species in Polk County per state law. Property owners are required to manage, and control prohibited species on their property.

Management

- Large stands herbicide can be broadly applied to the leaves
- Small patches may be cut manually and herbicide can be added to the cut stems
- Herbicides translocate to the root system, killing the plant
- Mowing and/or controlled burning can be used on dead stems



Identification

- Leaves are a bluish - green turning brown in winter
- Leaf sheaths cling tightly to a dull tan stem
- Leaf sheaths persist on stems through winter
- Stems are dull, ridged and hollow
- Mature stems can reach 18 feet tall
- Seed heads are arranged in large plumes that are 6-20 inches tall (top photo)
- Plumes are purple, turning brown as they mature
- Narrow ligules can be found at the base of the leaf sheath, native phragmites has a much wider ligule

