

Reed Canarygrass

Phalaris arundinacea

Description: Reed canarygrass is a tall (3'- 6' in height) rhizomatous wetland grass that forms dense, single-species stands. It chokes out streams and ditches increasing flooding and impeding salmon and other fish. Although used at times for forage in wet pastures, it can cause indigestion and illness in livestock. Reed canarygrass can out-compete most native species and impair wetlands by forming large, dense stands.

The sturdy, often hollow stems can be up to 1/2 inch in diameter, with some reddish coloration near the top. The leaf blades are flat and hairless, 1/4 to 3/4 of an inch wide. The flowers are borne in panicles (a loose, branching cluster of flowers, as in oats) on culms high above the leaves. The panicles are generally three to six inches in length. The species flowers in June and July

Habitat:

Mechanical: Removal of reed canarygrass by hand-pulling is practical only for small stands and requires a large investment of time and energy. Mowing can be effective for prevention of seed production if done at least twice a year and can help re-establish native species by increasing the amount of light that reaches the soil. However, mowing will not reduce populations, but can be part of a containment program.

Heavy equipment has been used unsuccessfully in reed canarygrass control. Rapid regrowth occurs from rhizome fragments and seeds that remain in the soil and it is nearly impossible to remove all seeds and fragments. Cultivation may actually rejuvenate stands of reed canarygrass and may cause inadvertent spread into previously uninfested areas. Be careful to clean equipment and tools after working in a reed canarygrass infested area in order to prevent spreading seed or root fragments to new areas.

Cultural control: Clipping back plants at ground level and covering them with black plastic tarps can reduce but not eliminate populations. Densely planting with native broadleaf trees such as willows and alders has shown some degree of control, as reed canarygrass is not especially shade tolerant. The reed canarygrass should be controlled before planting, and must be maintained by mowing, mulching, or herbicides until trees are tall enough to fully shade the area.

Chemical: Glyphosate

Rate **1.2 to 2.25 lb ae/A**

Time Apply to actively growing plants at early heading or in fall from mid-September to after first light frost.

Remarks: Check label regarding using a surfactant.

Caution: Glyphosate controls other vegetation in the treated area.

Site of action: Group 9: inhibits EPSP synthase

Chemical family: None generally accepted

Be careful of any overspray into ponds or creeks.

Recommended treatment: glyphosate since it is readily available

Distribution: Scattered throughout Asotin County in riparian areas.

ACNWCB Policy: The Board recommends not treating it unless treatment is going to continue for years followed by replanting desirable vegetation.

