

Exotic Common Reed

Identification:

The common reed is a vivacious plant of the Gramineae family, native to of Eurasia. It can be seen in wetlands, along roadsides or waterways. It can grow up to 5m tall. A distinctive feature is that the dead stem of the previous year can remain until late summer. They pass from yellowish green to dull beige and remain very stiff on top of which the feather-shaped (panicle or plume) from 15 to 40 cm, first purple then dark brown at maturity. Underground, its rhizomes can extend on several meters. Above ground, it can produce long stolons, sprouting up to 70 plants in a 10m range

Similar species:

There is actually a subspecies of this plant, the *Americanus* type, that is not alien. It can easily be mistaken for his exotic and invasive cousin. Even though they are similar, there are a few differences: The plume of the Exotic reed is bigger and denser, the stem is more often green or yellow while *Americanus*'s is normally deep red especially at the base with black spots. Those spots are never seen on the exotic common reed.

In doubt, consider the "what to do" section.



Nuisance

Its long stem and large plume can be pretty and the plant itself is used around the world as fuel or to make roof. However, this plant grows dense immensely fast and take over most places it colonises in a matter of a few years. Their colony are so dense, most species cannot grow near them. They also dry out most wetland or small waterways quickly. In addition, their nutriments intake can rapidly drain the surrounding, making the soil not as fertile. Finally, its stolons and rhizomes allow it to propagate up to 10m farther even 2 or 3 years later.

Why is an invasive species a problem?

All invasive species reproduce quickly, have no local predators, pose a threat to local plants living in similar conditions, and their elimination is almost impossible. Therefore, we must do everything in our power to prevent their spread. Report them on Sentinelle, the provincial website.



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What to do?

If you considered buying one, choose regional options such as the local subspecies *Americanus*, or one of our local cattails. If you see a colony on your property or in a public place, contact the municipality by email at stagiaire@cantonstanstead.ca, or phone at (819) 876-2948, ext. 227. If you want to remove them, cut off the old stems and the shoots from the ground every two weeks or so. This will weaken the plant and eventually kill it. To speed up the process, apply a weighted tarp to prevent regrowth and check around for growth. This procedure will likely be required for 3 years. Once you have cut pieces, put them in a sturdy plastic bag and place it in your black or green garbage bin. Do not put it in the brown garbage bin as the seeds and roots may survive the trip and disperse into the compost. Ensuring good riparian cover can greatly slow the spread of reed. Willows, for example, do this very well. Remember you might need a permit to work near the riparian strip.

