

## CENTRAL JERSEY INVASIVE SPECIES STRIKE TEAM

### *Invasive Plant Fact Sheet*

#### Common Reed (*Phragmites australis*)



**Family name:** Grass family (Poaceae)

**Native range:** Eurasia

**General:** Common reed is a stout grass that reaches 6.5-13 feet in height. It is most often seen in large colonies.

**Leaves:** Alternate, smooth, gray-green. Lance-shaped and pointed reaching 10 to 20 inches long and 1 inch wide. Long white hairs are present at the leaf-sheath junction. Stems are also smooth.

**Flowers:** The brown to purple plume-like flowers are 7.5-15 inches long appearing late July through September. The flowers are surrounded by silky white hairs. In the fall the plant turns brown and dries, and the flowers persist throughout the winter.

**Fruit:** Brown, small, and 0.3 inches long, ripening in late July through October.

**Look-alikes:** Some research shows that there are native populations of common reed, and are a subspecies, *Phragmites australis* ssp. *americanus*. The native and non-native plants are very difficult to differentiate.

**Habitat:** Lake, marsh, pond, river, stream, salt marsh.

**Threats to native habitats:** Common reed rapidly forms dense stands that exclude native plants. It can also infest waterways so they are impassable for recreational and commercial use.



**NJ Status:** Common reed is widespread. It is *highly threatening* to natural plant communities. All newly detected occurrences should be eradicated.

**Commercial Availability:**  
Not found.



Sources: Forestry Images: Forest Health, Natural Resources & Silviculture Images:  
<http://www.forestryimages.org>

<http://nbii-nin.ciesin.columbia.edu/ipane/icat/browse.do?specieId=85>

Rhoads, A.F. and T. Block. 2007. Plants of Pennsylvania. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. University of Pennsylvania Press, Philadelphia, PA. p. 349.



**Central Jersey Invasive Species Strike Team (CJISST)** is a regional cooperative effort to detect, map, and manage emerging populations of invasive species. This initiative is a partnership of state, county, and municipal agencies, conservation groups, and private citizens. To learn more, please contact us: **Friends of Hopewell Valley Open Space**, (609) 730-1560, [www.fohvos.org](http://www.fohvos.org) or **Upper Raritan Watershed Association**, (908) 234-1852, [www.urwa.org](http://www.urwa.org).

