

REED CANARY GRASS

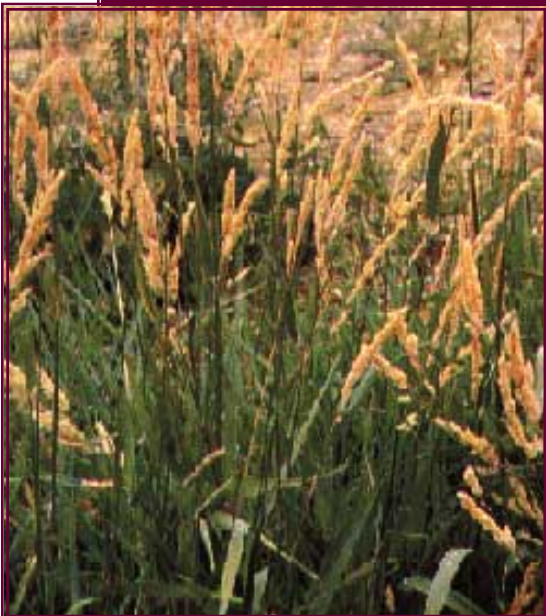
WHAT IS REED CANARY GRASS?

Reed canary grass is a tall perennial grass that commonly forms extensive single-species stands along the margins of lakes and streams and in wet open areas, with a wide distribution in Europe, Asia, northern Africa and North America. The stems can reach 2.5 meters in height. The leaf blades are blue-green when fresh and straw-colored when dry. The flowers are borne on the stem high above the leaves and are pinkish at full bloom. In many places, reed canary grass is an invasive species in wetlands, particularly in disturbed areas. When reed canary grass invades a wetland, it suppresses native vegetation and reduces diversity. The grass propagates by seed and rhizome, and once established, is difficult to eradicate. Reed canary grass is also planted as a hay crop or for forage. Furthermore it provides fibers which find use in pulp and papermaking processes.



ECOLOGICAL THREAT

Reed canary is a major threat to natural wetlands. It out competes most native species and presents a major challenge in wetland mitigation efforts. Reed canary grass forms large, single-species stands, with which other species cannot compete. If cut during the growing season a second growth spurt occurs in the fall. Invasion is associated with disturbances, such as ditch building, stream channeling sedimentation and intentional planting.



HOW TO CONTROL REED CANARY GRASS

The best way to control reed canary grass is through consecutive annual burns during either the spring or fall. It is also helpful to mow mid-June and October followed by frequent cultivation to reduce seeds and encourage native species. Research indicates that fall chemical application may also be effective.