

Reed Canary Grass

Phalaris arundinacea



Forage Value

G	F	P
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Bank/Shoreline Protection

E	G	F	P
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Plant Status

Native

Identification Tips

- ◆ a robust plant that can reach 2 m in height
- ◆ grows in large clumps
- ◆ leaf blades are flat, wide (up to 2 cm in width) and hairless
- ◆ seed/flower head is a dense, narrow panicle (6-18 cm long) on stems high above the leaves
- ◆ very distinctive rich gold colour in winter
- ◆ a highly variable species

Riparian Function & Values

- ◆ Reed canary grass is a heavy user of nutrients and can be effectively used in filter fields to absorb nutrients and clean water.
- ◆ The extensive rhizomatous root system and dense growth of reed canary grass provides excellent erosion control. However, it can be highly invasive, displacing desirable vegetation, if not properly managed.
- ◆ “Ribbon grass” is an ornamental variety with white pinstripes on the leaves.
- ◆ Can rapidly invade new areas.
- ◆ Overhanging stems and blades provide excellent cover for fish.

Riparian Remark

Reed canary grass is good forage for both wildlife and cattle. Palatability is highest early in the season, before the flower/seed heads appear.

