

Chinese Silver Grass

Miscanthus sinensis

Description -

- Loose plume-like heads of pale pink to red that turn silver in fall; on tall stalks that persist through winter.
- Basal leaves arise from a large central clump.
- Individual leaves taper to a point and are 3-4 feet long.
- Margins are sharp and slightly serrated.
- Seeds are rough with a twisted bristle tip.
- Spreads primarily by underground roots or rhizomes.

Distribution - Can invade roadsides, old fields, shores of reservoirs and forest openings following fires. Has spread throughout the eastern United States to Colorado and California.

Threat - Aggressive, may form colonies and produce a large number of airborne seeds. Can also resprout from pieces of rhizome. Highly flammable and poses a fire hazard as burning plants can have flame lengths of 30 feet.

Control - Small patches may be grubbed, but all of roots must be removed. Plant must be actively growing for herbicidal control. Use a 2% glyphosate solution in fall or late spring. Cover the leaves to the point of runoff, but be careful not to spray desirable vegetation.

Similar Plants - Big bluestem (*Andropogon gerardii*), which has a three-pronged flower spike resembling a turkey's foot. Sugarcane plume grass (*Saccharum giganteum*), is differentiated by its longer flower stalk (up to twelve feet) and shorter leaves (to one and a half feet).

Origin - Asia. Introduced to the U.S. as an ornamental.

Poison Hemlock

Conium maculatum

Description -

- Small white flowers clustered in large compound umbels that are 1.5-2.5 inches wide.
- Hollow stems are purple mottled, erect, smooth, and between 2-10 feet tall.
- Fern like leaves are alternate and basal, upper leaves progressively smaller.
- Leaves are 3-4 times pinnately divided; the enlarged petiole base sheaths the stem.

Distribution - Invades riparian areas, ditches, old fields, roadsides throughout most of North America.

Threat - All parts of the plant are toxic to humans and animals when eaten. Prolific seed production, aggressive growth habits and tolerance of shade allow rapid spread which overwhelms native vegetative cover. Not valuable to wildlife as food or shelter.

Control - Small infestations can be dug up or cut back before flowering. Do not compost flowers as they can go to seed. Plants and the first year rosette phase can be treated with 2,4-D in early spring or late fall. Repeated applications may be required to deplete the seed bank.

Similar Plants - Cow parsnip (*Heracleum maximum*) has palmately compound leaves. Water hemlock (*Cicuta maculata*) has more delicate umbels and twice compound leaves.

Origin - Eurasia. Introduced to the U.S. as a garden plant.

Common Reed

Phragmites australis

Description -

- Herbaceous perennial grass with hollow stout stems that can grow up to 15 feet.
- Lanceolate leaves up to 2 feet long.
- Large feathery plumes of flowers develop by mid-summer.
- Purple/brown flowers turn tan or gray and seeds set through fall and winter.

Distribution - Thrives in sunny wetland habitats. Occurs throughout the U.S.

Threat - Spreads rapidly by rhizomes and can quickly take over areas, creating a monoculture. Rhizomes can extend 30 feet in one year. Produces large quantities of seeds. Monocultures as large as 7000 acres have been documented in other states.

Control - Apply Rodeo herbicide to the leaves when plants are tasseling to translocate the chemical to the rhizome. Re-treatments are often needed due to denseness of foliage and inability of spray to reach all plants at one time. Cutting with hedge trimmers just before seed set can reduce vigor. Treatment will be needed for several years.

Similar Plants - Giant reed is similar in appearance but is usually found in upland sites.

Origin - Uncertain, *Phragmites australis* is found on every continent except Antarctica.

Common Reed



Poison Hemlock



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