



DECLARED PLANT

GIANT REED

Arundo donax

Giant reed is large perennial grass that forms dense, long-lived thickets around bodies of fresh water.

Giant reed is declared under the *Natural Resources Management Act 2004*. Sale of the live plant is prohibited, and land owners must comply with instructions to keep it within the boundaries of their land.

Other common names: bamboo, Danubian reed, giant cane, giant Danube reed, Spanish reed, elephant grass.

Family: *Poaceae*.

Synonyms: *Arundo bambusifolia*, *Arundo bengalensis*, *Arundo coleotricha*, *Arundo sativa*.

Origin: Native to the middle east, India and southern Europe. Introduced in colonial times as an amenity plant and for making cane products.

DESCRIPTION

Habit: Perennial with unbranched vertical woody stems growing 2 to 7 m tall from a creeping rhizome.

Leaves: Evenly spaced up stem, sheathing, rounded at the base, to 7 cm broad, tapering to a point, hairless but with rough edges.

Inflorescence: A plume-like panicle above the leaves, densely branched, to 60 cm long.

Flowers: Green, enclosed by silky-hairy glumes (husk-like bracts), with 3 stamens. Flowering time: March to July.

Fruit: Dry, hairy, 3-8 mm long with an awn to 3 mm long. Seeds: Not produced.

WHY IS IT A PROBLEM?

Large infestations can change stream flow due to their bulk and ability to trap sediment and floating debris.

The stems and dry leaves are highly flammable, increasing fire risk and intensity in riparian vegetation. Giant reed regenerates rapidly from the rhizomes after burning. The stems and leaves contain alkaloids, tryptamines and other toxins that make them inedible to most herbivorous insects and also deter grazing animals.

Giant reed has been proposed for use as a biomass or biochar crop. Under favourable conditions such as wetlands and along waterways, rapid spread by rhizomes and fragmentation of plant stems might occur.



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HOW IT SPREADS

Giant reed does not reproduce by seed. Clumps spread by underground rhizomes that produce successive stems. Vegetative spread occurs when stems or rhizomes are moved in soil or garden waste, or planted deliberately. The plants can be carried downstream during floods.

HABITAT

Giant reed invades along streams and in wetlands in areas that receive over 300 mm rainfall per annum. It tolerates a broad range of climates and conditions, including salinity.

Giant reed can grow in infertile and saline soils ranging from coarse river sands to heavy clays, but grows best in fertile alluvial soils above the water level along freshwater streams.

DISTRIBUTION

Giant reed will persist indefinitely at a site even if it does not spread, as seen in the high rainfall parts of SA. It is known to be present as plantings and escapes in the Adelaide Mount Lofty Ranges, South Australian Murray Darling Basin, Northern and Yorke and South Australian Arid Lands NRM regions. Also recorded from all mainland States of Australia.

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

Seek control advice if you have this weed.

Weed control information is available at: pir.sa.gov.au/biosecurity/weeds_and_pest_animals/weeds_in_sa



FOR MORE INFORMATION

Contact your local Natural Resources Centre for information on controlling declared weeds:

www.naturalresources.sa.gov.au

Images: Plant in garden: Boubu at French Wikipedia; Leaf sheaths: David J. Moorhead, University of Georgia, Bugwood.org; Flower heads Rebekah D. Wallace, University of Georgia, Bugwood.org; Infestation Biosecurity SA

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