

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE  
SOIL CONSERVATION SERVICE

PLANT GUIDE

This planting guide is provided to assist in the final evaluation of PI-421524 and PMT-2440 common reed as plants for shoreline erosion control.

Species:	<u>Phragmites communis</u>	<u>Phragmites australis</u>
Common Name:	Common reed	Common reed
Accession No.:	PI-421524	PMT-2440

Description: Common reed (Phragmites communis) is a tall wann-season, perennial reed-like grass. The stems or culms range from 4 to 16 feet (1.5-5 m) in height. The plants spread from long horizontal rhizomes and stolons. It is not unusual for rootstocks to grow 30 to 45 feet (9-14 m) during a favorable growing season. The plant grows in swamps and wet areas nearly throughout the United States. Viable seed is not produced in Oklahoma, Kansas, and Nebraska; consequently, establishment of a stand is dependent upon vegetative propagation by stolons or rhizomes.

Areas In Which Field Plantings Should Be Established:

MLRA's - Oklahoma, all except 77  
Kansas, all except 77  
Nebraska, all except 60, 64, 67, and 72

Site Selection, Establishment, Maintenance, and Evaluation:

- a. Soils - Common reed grows on wet soils along lakes, streams, and marshes. In selecting sites for field plantings, emphasis should be placed on sites having streambank or shoreline erosion problem, or sites subject to sedimentation, frequent flooding, or ponding.
- b. Fertilizer - When the front slope of a dam is to be seeded, the general recommendation for fertilizer is 40 pounds of available nitrogen and the same quantity of available phosphorus per acre (41 kg/ha). This fertility of course assists in stimulating growth of vegetative plantings of rhizomatous species of water-tolerant grasses on these relatively sterile soils. Generally fertilizer is not recommended for wetland plantings or when a native grass mixture will be seeded.
- c. Planting preparations - In relatively flat front berm slopes that have been packed by heavy construction equipment, chisel furrows 1.5 feet (.5 m) deep and 3 to 6 feet (1-2 m) apart will provide a suitable planting area especially if they have had an opportunity to mellow for a month or two prior to planting. Pieces of stolons or rhizomes 1 to 1.5 feet (.3-.5 m) in length may be hand planted using a spade or planting bar. Cover each piece with two inches of soil. The best planting dates are early spring (March, April, May) or in late fall or early winter after plants have become dormant.
- d. Care and handling of planting stock - Plant materials should be handled so as to be adequately protected from overheating, drying, sunscald, or freezing. When not planted within a few hours after harvest, material should be heeled-in in moist soil in accordance with acceptable horticultural practices. Planting operations should cease when the ground is too dry or other conditions exist that would likely cause unsatisfactory results.
- e. Watering - Normally all plantings will be watered when planted provided they were planted in dry soil. Approximately 1 gallon (4 liters) of water per linear foot (.3 m) of row (or equivalent) should be applied.

(over)

Evaluating A **New** Stand:

It may take several growing seasons to determine if a stand is adequate for the purpose. One plant per 8 feet (2.4 m) of row should be considered as a stand. Because of the rhizomatous characteristic of the plant, it will soon spread within and between the rows.

**Stand Management:**

- a. **Grazing** - Do not graze for two years after planting. Exclude entirely from grazing if erosion control is the primary objective.
- b. **Weed control** - Mow weeds at a 6-inch (15 cm) height. After the first year, 2,4-D amine may be applied according to manufacturer's recommendations.

**Evaluation:**

The preferred standard is "Shoreline" common reed, prairie cordgrass, or Chinese silvergrass. Emphasis should be placed on its suitability for erosion control and wetland wildlife habitat.