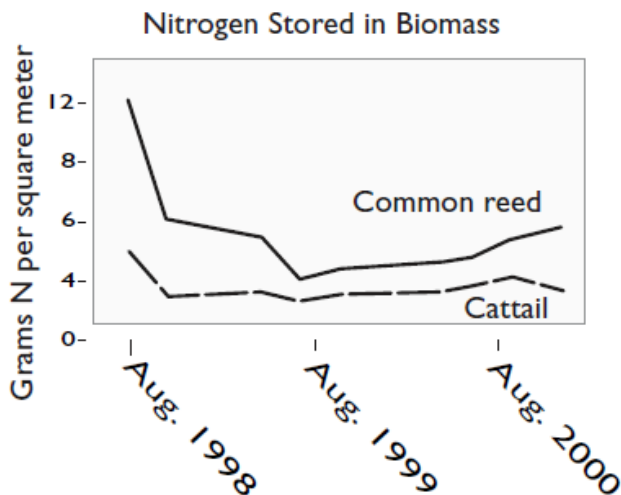


Common Reed *(Phragmites australis)*



Common reed is a tall, perennial grass that can grow 12-16 feet tall. Flowers form bushy, golden clusters in late July and August. As seeds mature, the clusters begin to look fluffier due to hairs that grow on the seeds. A dense network of roots and rhizomes can grow several feet deep beneath the ground. Common reed spreads horizontally by sending out rhizome runners, which can grow up to a foot in a single growing season.

In North America, there are both native and introduced varieties. The variety introduced from Europe is considered invasive in 18 states and is the one typically seen in New York. The dense beds can spread rapidly in wetlands, crowding out native plants. They often change marsh hydrology, alter wildlife habitat, and increase fire potential. Common reed can be considered beneficial, however, when used as a building material or in a water purification system.



Physical Characteristics:

- Tall, thin grass, 12-16 feet tall
- Bushy or fluffy seed tops in late summer
- Grows densely
- 8-20 inch long leaves

Location:

- Estuaries and other wetlands; can tolerate brackish water
- Can dominate fields of up to half a square mile

Also Known As:

- *Phragmites*

Benefits

- Stabilizes eroding shorelines
- Takes up excess nutrients, specifically nitrates

Concerns

- Spreads very quickly
- Chokes out native species