



# Phragmites australis

Family name: **Poaceae**Common name: **Poaceae**

Local name: (غاب) Ghab , (بوص) Bous , (قصب) Gassab

PFS-  
Phragmites  
australis\_06a

## Wild



### Role in Biodiversity

The native subspecies of *Phragmites australis* is vital for sustaining habitat and biodiversity. It provides a habitat for small mammals, insects, reptiles and nesting sites for several species of birds. *Phragmites australis* is outcompeted by the more invasive and introduced subspecies, which grows more aggressively in some locations. This is more common in disturbed soils where their growth has increased dramatically, leading to lower plant diversity replacing the native vegetation. They are considered as pollutants responsible for the alteration of the natural hydrologic regime, dredging, and increased sedimentation.



### Environment and Growing

*Phragmites australis* is highly adaptable to freshwater and brackish water, normally up to 10 ppt total dissolved salt. It can survive even in metal-polluted waters and grows well in good supply of nutrients .

#### Growth requirements:

- pH range 4.5-7.0.
- Soil moisture range 0.12–6.66 g water/g soil.
- Rainfall as low as 50-100 mm per year.
- Temperature range 39-34°C.



### Reproduction and Communication

*Phragmites australis* is a bisexual plant pollinated mainly by wind. Self-pollination or agamospermy may occur. A single silky inflorescence develops at the end of each fertile stem can produces 500–2000 seeds.

This plant also reproduces by rhizomes and stolons growth, which can result in large clonal masses. Rhizome fragments spread naturally in floodwaters, aided by water and wind action.



### Life span

A single rhizome of *Phragmites australis* can live for 3 to 6 years producing buds that form more vertical rhizomes each year.



### Size

The below ground biomass of *Phragmites australis* is generally greater than the biomass of above ground parts. The stems can reach 1.5 to 5 metres tall.



### Parts



Stems are erect, hollow, 150–600 cm long, 5-15 mm thick, with hollow internodes.

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Roots are dense network of rhizomes which can grow down to two meters in depth.



Leaves are linear to lanceolate-linear, flat, drooping. leaf-blades deciduous at the ligule, 20–60 cm long, 8–32 mm wide with pointed tips, and smooth surface.



Flowers are in a panicle inflorescence. They are oblong, purplish when young, straw colored at maturity, 15-50 cm long, 6-20 cm wide.



Fruits are caryopsis with an adherent pericarp.



Seeds are 2 to 3 mm long attached to the caryopsis.

## INTRODUCTION

### Grass herb

*Phragmites australis*, the common reed grass, is an emergent tall grass that forms dense colonies in wetland habitats such as lakes, rivers, meadows, streams, swamps, springs, marshes, flood plains, pools, irrigation channels and dams. It is also found in coastal habitats such as salt marshes and mangrove swamps. *Phragmites australis* is native to the temperate, subtropical and tropical Old World. It is only introduced in a few countries. It is characterized by forming dense clumps of vertical stems rising from a network of underground rhizomes.

In Sudan, *Phragmites australis* is very common in shallow water and wet soils, and irrigation channels. It is often cheap and readily available as a raw material for bulding different types of shelters. Reeds have been used for centuries as a main roofing materials in many parts of Sudan especially in the White Nile and central Sudan.

## LIVELIHOODS / CULTURE

### Cultivation

Reed grass grows naturally in Sudan in areas with wet soil or shallow water bodies, especially on the White Nile. It is not cultivated but communities have a kind of strategy for cutting it, drying it, and storing it in preparation for distributing it in the markets and then using it for various construction purposes.

### Cultural Value

- Reed grass is one of the main construction materials in Sudan. Stems are used as a good roofing material in most of the traditional buildings. They are also used to make walls of huts, Rawakeeb and animals shelters (zreeba).
- Reed grass is also used for making craft items, mats and baskets.
- Flowering stalks yield a fibre suitable for rope making.
- Stems are also used for making pens for writing.

No medical uses are reported for this species.

### Cultural Expressions

<https://youtu.be/h6np-jq6pSg?t=6>

This lament was said by Banuna bint (daughter) Almak Nimr, head of the Ja'aliyyin tribe in the Shendi and Mutamma region for her brother Amara, who passed away on his sickbed. It was an easy death, not one she wanted for her brother as a brave man.

## THREATS

*Phragmites australis* is a widespread and abundant species and is not in danger of extinction. It is therefore assessed as of Least Concern. It is only thretened regionally in some places by susceptibility to grazing, high water current flow velocities, and nutrient requirements for stability for initial growth.

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