

KEY
CHARACTERISTICS

growth Tall erect perennial cane or reed-like grass, 2-8 m high. Fleshy creeping rootstocks form compact masses from which tough, fibrous roots emerge that penetrate soil deeply.

Inflorescence Plume-like flower head, compact, creamy to brown in color. Blooms March to September. Spikelets consist of several florets, approx 12mm long with florets becoming progressively smaller.

lemma Lemmas thin, 3-nerved and hairy. Narrowed upward with nerves ending in slender teeth; the middle one becomes an awn.

stems Tough, semi-woody, hollow and green. Unbranched or with single lateral branches. 1-4 cm in diameter branching in 2nd yr. Fading to yellowish-brown in winter or when drought stressed.

leaves Pale green to blue-green and alternate; 2-8 cm wide at base and 30 cm long, narrowing to a point. Base of leaves heart shaped and hairy tufted; these persisting after blade falls.



Stem detail; note 2 ranked leaves and hairless stem



Elevation:
Below 4000 feet

Ecotypes Invaded:
Freshwater and riparian systems.

ECOLOGY & DISTRIBUTION

Establishes in moist places such as ditches, streams and riverbanks, growing best in well drained soils where abundant moisture is available. It crowds out native plants, forms dense stands, interferes with flood control, increases fire potential and reduces habitat for wildlife.

Giant reed tolerates a wide variety of conditions, including high salinity and can flourish in many soil types from heavy clays to loose sands. It reproduces vegetatively by spreading outwards and/or from clumps that break off from the adult plant. During floods, it can float miles downstream where root and stem fragments may take root and initiate new infestations.

Sometimes confused with common reed *Arundo phragmites*, which will only grow to about roft tall. Common reed does not have the hairy lemma and glabrous rachilla.

SUITABLE HABITAT



Suitable habitat based on the Arizona Wildlands Invasive Plant Working Group (AZ-WIPWG) assessment. Green = suitable habitat; White = unsuitable habitat; Gray = unknown. Based on Brown, Lowe & Pase (1980) vegetation communities.

