Reed Canarygrass

Washington State Management Guide

by The Salmon Center

Description

Reed Canary grass (RCG) is a cool-season, sod-forming perennial grass 3-9 ft tall that flowers from May to June. It grows best in wet to damp soil but can still tolerate prolonged drought in seasonally wet areas. It prefers wet meadows, stream banks, lake margins, ditches, and shallow wetlands. However, it does not tolerate shade well and prefers full sun. This is why we prescribe methods of planting that will create a layered, shaded canopy of native plants. This document explains the correct methods to create a desired native plant environment rid of the detrimentally invasive RCG.




Successful Long Term Control

Reed Canarygrass (RCG) is a threat to the ecological integrity of countless wetlands across WA State. It reduces botanical and biological diversity, causes livestock indegestion, forms physical barriers to salmonid migration, negatively alters hydrology, and decreases retention time of nutrients and carbon. Unfortunately, RCG is widespread throughout WA state, and eradication is unlikely in all but the most isolated locations. Reinfestation is likely unless control, monitoring and maintenance are carefully planned and implemented. Successful long term control will follow these steps:

PREVENTION

- *Monitor edges of wetlands that are dominated by native plants. Remove RCG & avoid disturbing wetland.*

REMOVAL

- *Work from least to most infested areas. Follow perscribed removal methods for your situation.*

DEPLETE SEED BANK

- *Deplete seed bank before replanting. Allow seeds to grow, then remove the plants several times over at least 2 seasons. {seeds can remain viable for up to 4 years!}*

REVEGETATE

- *Plant shade-producing or highly-competitive native species that thrive in your location. Strive to establish a multi-layered shade canopy, preferably coniferous.*

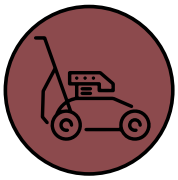
MONITORING & MAINTENANCE

- *Monitoring & maintenance is imperative until native vegetation becomes well established. Any site left unmaintained will revert back to RCG within a few years!*

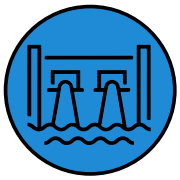
Methods of Removal & What to Plant ➤

Methods of Removal - most effective

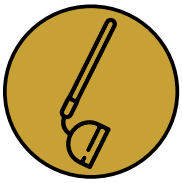
TREE & SHRUB PLANTING



MOWING
{Twice Yearly)
early to mid-June
early-October



ALTERING HYDROLOGY



TILLAGE

MULCHING/SOLARIZATION WITH FABRIC

TIMING IS EVERYTHING

RCG blooms at specific times of the year, so it's important to keep an eye on it to watch the spread. Growth begins in early spring, growing vertically for 5-7 weeks and then expands horizontally. Flowering occurs in early summer.Ridding a habitat of RCG will take several years, so it's imparative to remain persistant and diligent

What to plant, where to plant?

It all depends on your specific area! So what might work for one place, may not be right for another. Our native plants have their preferences. Below are two lists highlighting some of the most common and effective native plants that grow near salt or freshwater. These are the areas most likely to be invaded by RCG, since it prefers damp environments as well.

MARINE SHORELINE *{salt tolerant}*

- Oceanspray *{Holodiscus discolor}*
- Tall Oregon Grape *{Mahonia aquifolium}*
- Serviceberry *{Amelanchier alnifolia}*
- Pacific Madrone *{Arbutus menziesii}*
- Salal *{Gaultheria shallon}*
- Shore Pine *{Pinus contorta}*
- Beaked Hazelnut *{Corylus cornuta}*
- Snowberry *{Symphoricarpos albus}*
- Shore Pine *{Pinus contorta}*

STREAMSIDE *{freshwater}*

- Cascara *{Rhamnus purshiana}*
- Grand Fir *{Abies grandis}*
- Big Leaf Maple *{Aer macrophyllum}*
- Indian Plum *{Oemlaria cerasiformis}*
- Western Cabapple *{Malus fusca}*
- Sitka Spruce *{Picea sitchensis}*
- Pacific Ninebark *{Physocarpus capitatus}*
- Black Twinberry *{Lonicera involucrata}*
- Salmonberry *{Rubus spectabilis}*
- Red Osier Dogwood *{Cornus sericea}*
- Sword Fern *{Polystichum munitum}*
- Western Red Cedar *{Thuja plicata}*

NATIVE PLANT SCHEDULE

Research the correct timing and planting conditions for the native plants you are choosing to replinish our habitat with. Set your new habitat up for success by creating a thoughtful planting schedule.