



Cooperative Extension Service  
Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences

## *Calamagrostis arundinacea*<sup>1</sup>

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### Introduction

Reed Grass is an ornamental grass that attains a height of 5 to 7 feet (Fig. 1). The medium green leaves of this plant are lanceolate in shape and may reach a length of 5 to 7 feet. They also exhibit good fall and winter color. The inflorescence of this plant is a compact, spikelike panicle that is 4 to 8 inches long. These inflorescences are loosely branched and have a pinkish white or reddish cast. They appear in the summer and are followed by attractive seedheads that are used in flower arrangements. This plant spreads by rhizomes which allows it to slowly increase in diameter.

### General Information

**Scientific name:** *Calamagrostis arundinacea*

**Pronunciation:** kal-uh-muh-GRAW-stiss uh-run-din-NAY-see-uh

**Common name(s):** Reed Grass

**Family:** *Gramineae*

**Plant type:** herbaceous; ornamental grass

**USDA hardiness zones:** 5 through 9 (Fig. 2)

**Planting month for zone 7:** year round

**Planting month for zone 8:** year round

**Planting month for zone 9:** year round

**Origin:** not native to North America

**Uses:** specimen; mass planting; container or above-ground planter; cut flowers; border; accent

**Availability:** somewhat available, may have to go out of the region to find the plant

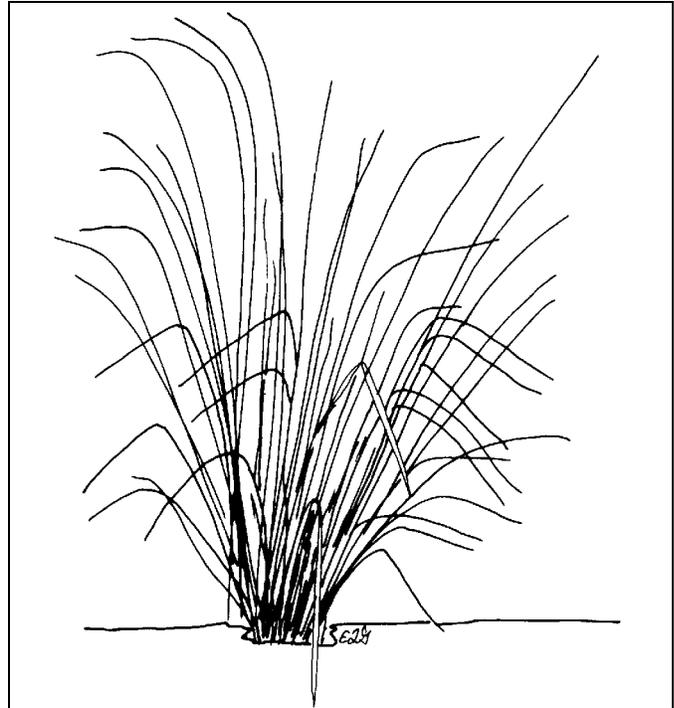


Figure 1. Reed Grass.

### Description

**Height:** 5 to 7 feet

**Spread:** 5 to 7 feet

**Plant habit:** upright

**Plant density:** dense

**Growth rate:** fast

**Texture:** fine

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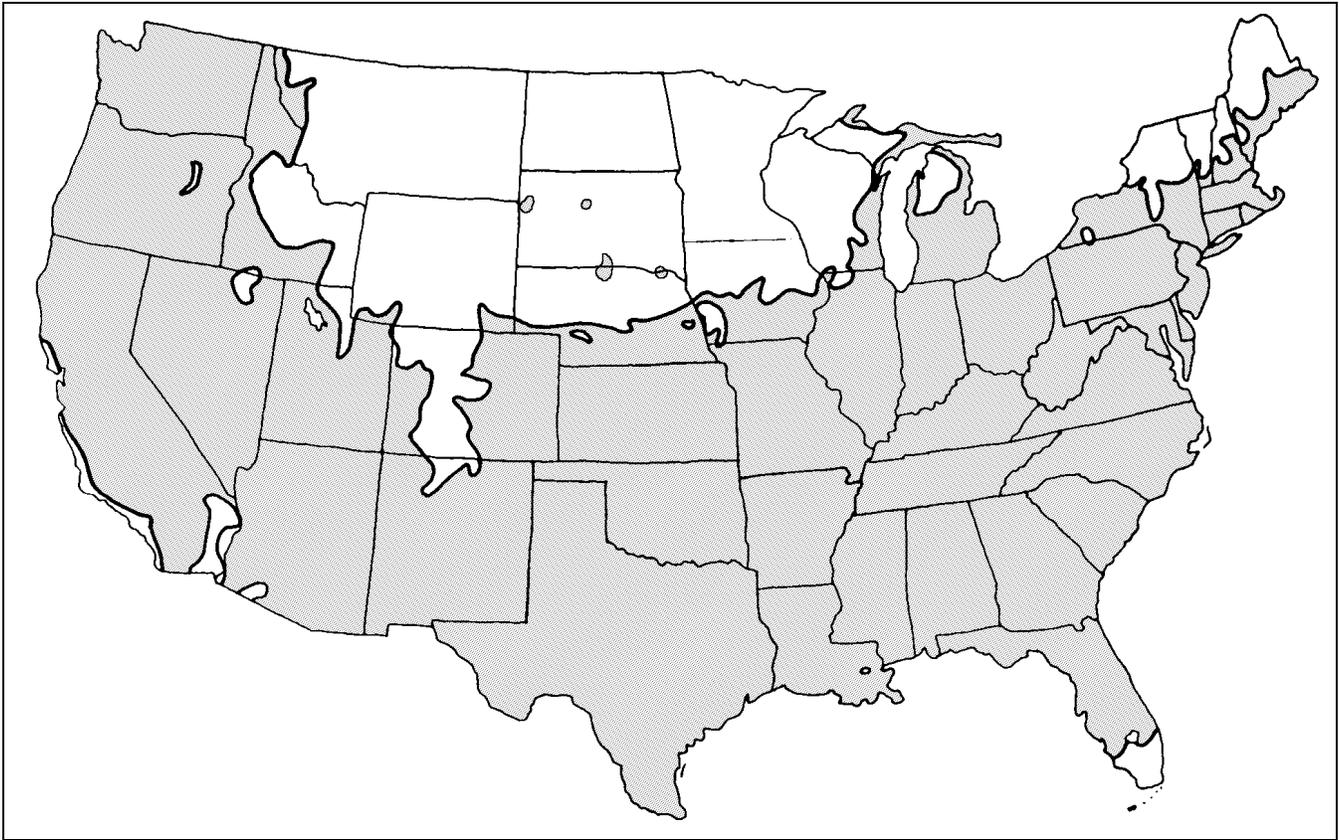


Figure 2. Shaded area represents potential planting range.

**Foliage**

**Leaf arrangement:** most emerge from the soil, usually without a stem

**Leaf type:** simple

**Leaf margin:** entire

**Leaf shape:** lanceolate

**Leaf venation:** parallel

**Leaf type and persistence:** deciduous

**Leaf blade length:** more than 36 inches

**Leaf color:** green

**Fall color:** brown or tan

**Fall characteristic:** showy

**Flower**

**Flower color:** pink

**Flower characteristic:** summer flowering

**Fruit**

**Fruit shape:** elongated

**Fruit length:** less than .5 inch

**Fruit cover:** dry or hard

**Fruit color:** tan

**Fruit characteristic:** inconspicuous and not showy

**Trunk and Branches**

**Trunk/bark/branches:** typically multi-trunked or clumping stems

**Current year stem/twig color:** not applicable

**Current year stem/twig thickness:** not applicable

**Culture**

**Light requirement:** plant grows in part shade/part sun; plant grows in the shade

**Soil tolerances:** extended flooding; clay; acidic; loam;

**Drought tolerance:** moderate

**Soil salt tolerances:** good

**Plant spacing:** 36 to 60 inches

## Other

**Roots:** not applicable

**Winter interest:** plant has winter interest due to unusual form, nice persistent fruits, showy winter trunk, or winter flowers

**Outstanding plant:** plant has outstanding ornamental features and could be planted more

**Invasive potential:** not known to be invasive

**Pest resistance:** no serious pests are normally seen on the plant

## Use and Management

Reed Grass is excellent for naturalized areas in freshwater bogs and swamps, around lakes and ponds, and along streams. It is suited for planted near water gardens due to its tolerance of wet soil. It is a good specimen plant but also looks great planted in mass. This grass is tolerant of salt spray making it wonderful for coastal landscapes. In seashore plantings it can provide a tall screen or windbreak and is useful for erosion control. It is an aggressive plant with the potential to become invasive.

This grass can grow in an area of the landscape receiving full sun or partial shade. Reed Grass prefers wet brackish soils but will thrive in heavy clay soils with less moisture. The size of this plant depends on the moisture supply; it will grow larger with increased moisture levels. One may need to dig out excess plants when they become invasive.

The propagation of Reed Grass is accomplished by plant divisions.

### Pests and Diseases

Usually free of pests and diseases.