

# Giant reed (*Arundo donax*)

## Weed management guide

Weed type  
**Grass**

November 2022

[www.lls.nsw.gov.au/regions/central-west](http://www.lls.nsw.gov.au/regions/central-west)



In NSW, weeds are regulated by the NSW Biosecurity Act, 2015. All land managers have a General Biosecurity Duty to contain the spread of weeds.

*“General Biosecurity Duty means that any person dealing with plant matter must take measures to prevent, minimise or eliminate the biosecurity risk (as far as is reasonably practicable).”*

The Regional priority for Giant reed is to protect assets from the weed’s impacts and to prevent its arrival and establishment in the region. In order to achieve this, Land Managers are asked to: *Mitigate the risk of new weeds being introduced to their land and reduce impacts on priority assets. The plant should not be bought, sold, grown, carried or released into the environment.*

For further information, contact your local Biosecurity (Weeds) Officer via Central West Local Land Services or visit NSW WeedWise.

NSW WeedWise



# Habit and description

Giant reed is a rhizomatous clump-forming perennial, native to Europe and Asia that can grow 6m tall and resembles (superficially) bamboo. Giant reed has many leaves, which are evenly spaced in two rows along the stem. Inflorescence (flowers) are large, up to 60cm long, erect and plume-like. The inflorescence is white when mature. Giant reed flowers in spring to summer. Frequently a weed of river banks and wetlands.



Photo: © M. Fagg | Weeds Australia



Photo: © R.G. & F.J Richardson | Australian National Botanic Gardens



Photo: © C. Evans | Weeds Australia

# Reproduction and spread

Giant reed produces light seed that is wind or water dispersed. It can also spread vegetatively from rhizome fragments. Rhizomes often spread in garden waste, incorrectly managed soil and waterways.

## Impacts

### Agriculture



- Grows quickly and can be difficult to manage once established.
- Can create dense thickets on waterways through agricultural land which may impact stock access.

### Native vegetation



- It can outcompete native vegetation.
- Reduce food and habitat for native fauna.
- Block and restrict waterways.

## Management

### Chemical



- Spot spray leaves immediately after flowering prior to dormancy to ensure transfer to the root system.
- Herbicide via cut stems may also be effective.
- Seek the guidance of an experienced Weeds Officer for expert advice on herbicide use.
- Visit [www.apvma.gov.au](http://www.apvma.gov.au) for a list of registered products, product labels and permit requirements.
- NSW DPI (2021) provides a list of recommended herbicides for the control of Giant reed at <https://weeds.dpi.nsw.gov.au/Weeds/GiantReed>.

### Non-chemical



- Small infestations can be removed by hand, but it is laborious and rhizomes need to be completely removed to prevent resprouting.
- Bulldozers can be used to remove large infestations, but rhizome removal would need to occur post bulldozing.
- Fire can be used to control above ground biomass, but it does not kill underground rhizomes.

