



# Aquatic Nuisance Species Program

## Illegal Aquatic Plants

2730 Fish Hatchery Road, West Columbia, SC 29172  
Phone (803) 755-2836 Fax (803) 755-0617

### Phragmites or Common Reed (*Phragmites australis*)

*Phragmites* is an emergent perennial plant that can reach 15 feet in height and is long lived. It can grow along the shorelines of water bodies or in water several feet deep. Leaves grow alternately and are two-ranked, flat, long-attenuate up to 1 1/2 feet long and 1/2 inch wide. They are blue-green in color with rough margins. The leafy stem is topped by a 1 foot long silvery brown silky panicle of flowers (shown in inset). It is capable of reproduction by seeds, but spreads primarily by underground stems called rhizomes. A *Phragmites* invasion alters the structure and function of diverse marsh ecosystems by changing species composition, nutrient cycles and hydrological regimes. Dense stands of *Phragmites* decrease native biodiversity and quality of wetland habitat, particularly for migrating wading birds and waterfowl species.



IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS OR JUST NEED MORE INFORMATION VISIT THE WEBSITE:  
<http://www.dnr.state.sc.us/water/envaff/aquatic/phragmites.html>