



# reed sweetgrass

US ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS

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<b>Common Name</b>	reed sweetgrass
<b>Genus &amp; Species</b>	<i>Glyceria maxima</i>
<b>Family</b>	Poaceae
<b>Order</b>	Cyperales
<b>Class</b>	

**Diagnosis:** *Glyceria maxima* is a perennial, rhizomatous grass with unbranched stems that can grow up to 2.5 m high. Leaf sheaths have prominent midribs, visible transverse veins, and are closed to near the top. The unlobed, membranous ligules are 1.2-6 mm long, smooth and obtuse in shape. Leaf blades are flat, 30-60 cm long and 0.6-2.0 cm wide. The leaf blades are shallowly grooved, with prominent midribs. The leaf margins have short, stiff hairs that are rough to the touch. These are bisexual plants with a panicles that can be either open (chasmogamous) or contracted and symmetrical. The inflorescence branches have short, stiff hairs similar to those on the leaf margins. *Glyceria* could be confused with large specimens of *Glyceria grandis* (American mannagrass), but this species typically only grows up to 1.5 m, has nodding (rather than upright) inflorescences, and has shorter glumes and lemmas. It could also be mistaken for *Puccinellia* because of their similar spikelet structure and preference for wet habitats, but *Glyceria* is distinguished by its inability to tolerate highly alkaline soils, typically more flexible panicle branches, closed leaf sheaths, and single-veined upper glumes.



**Ecology:** Plants will flower and fruit from June to August. Aggressive growth has been demonstrated in both Ontario and its own native range. Early spring growth and prolific root formation help to ensure a high competitive advantage over native plants. *Glyceria maxima* can form large monotypic stands in wetlands, reducing plant species diversity.

**Habitat & Distribution:** It grows best in open sunny grassy or shrub wetlands, but can tolerate partial shade of wooded wetlands such as swamps. It thrives during prolonged periods of flooding. The plant's native range is the temperate zones of Eurasia. This plant was first detected in Ontario and then spread to MI and WI with later populations occurring in MA, WA and IL.

**Status:** This plant can disperse by way of floating vegetation (nodes or rhizomes), with other pathways identified as ornamental planting and attachment to wildlife or humans.

**USGS Fact Sheets:** <http://nas.er.usgs.gov/queries/factsheet.aspx?SpeciesID=1120>