

## Herbicide Common Sense

NOHLC treats Phragmites using an herbicide called glyphosate. ShoreKlear™ and other brands contain 53.8% glyphosate with no surfactants added. ShoreKlear™ is the only brand of glyphosate currently sold in small quantities for homeowners. ShoreKlear™ may be purchased online or at local stores such as McKays Do It Center in Holly and The Pond Place in Milford.

Manufacturers recommend adding surfactants to glyphosate if the herbicide is sprayed. Roundup™, ShoreKlear Plus™, and other products are premixed with surfactants. However, surfactants are not necessary if the herbicide is placed on a cut stem, as described in this pamphlet. Surfactants may harm amphibians, fish, and other wetland animals. NOHLC does not recommend these mixtures to control small infestations of Phragmites. Current research suggests that glyphosate without surfactants, used as described in this pamphlet, controls Phragmites without harming wetland animals, and will kill any plants that absorb the herbicide. Because glyphosate affects metabolism in plants but not animals, it has very low toxicity to humans.

Homeowners should take common-sense precautions; wear gloves when handling it, and mix and store the glyphosate in something to contain spills. Larger infestations may require repeated treatments or different treatment options. More information is available at:

- [www.phragmites.org](http://www.phragmites.org)
  - [www.invasiveplants.net](http://www.invasiveplants.net)
  - [www.Michigan.gov/DEQ](http://www.Michigan.gov/DEQ)
  - [www.mipn.org](http://www.mipn.org)
- Midwest Invasive Plant Network



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## A Homeowner's Guide to Small-Scale Phragmites Control



Phragmites (Common Reed) is a tall reed grass that thrives in our wetlands. It grows up to 15 ft tall, and has attractive seed heads in fall which look like feather dusters. It spreads primarily by its roots, which can extend thirty feet or more.

## What is wrong with Phragmites?

The Phragmites found in southeast Michigan is an invasive alien plant. Without the natural competitors in its native habitat, it is growing unchecked. Phragmites crowds out cattails and other native wetland plants. It limits shoreline access to the water, and it reduces property values. It harms our wildlife by crowding out the native plants they depend on for food and shelter. It also grows so thickly that it is a fire hazard when dry. It is important to kill small infestations when they first develop.

## Non-Chemical Controls

Because 80% of the Phragmites biomass is in the underground rhizomes, nonchemical controls have little effect.

Pulling is usually impossible, because the roots spread out so widely. Pulling results in broken root fragments which will grow more Phragmites.

Mowing weekly for several years can control or eliminate small patches, but this is only practical on dry land. Mowing just a few times a year may actually stimulate more growth.

## How can I get rid of small patches in my backyard?

Cutting and putting a drop of herbicide in the stem is the best way to eliminate small patches. NOHLC offers a *Starter Kit To Control Invasive Plants*. This starter kit contains a chemical-resistant plastic dropper bottle containing a little biodegradable purple dye. The dye (food coloring may also be used) makes the herbicide more visible and easy to use. Fill the bottle halfway with glyphosate, an herbicide which may be used in wetlands. Then fill the bottle with distilled water.



August through October are the best months to treat Phragmites, after the seed heads have developed and before the first killing frost. In fall the plant turns brown and goes dormant for the winter.

Cut the stem a few inches above ground, and put a few drops of herbicide directly into the hollow stem.



Removing small infestations of Phragmites will make room for beautiful native plants and restore habitat for wildlife.