United States Department of Agriculture

A Conservation Plant Released by the Natural Resources Conservation Service
James E. “Bud” Smith Plant Materials Center, Knox City, Texas

‘Shoreline’ Common Reed

Phragmites australis (Cal) Trin. ex Steud

USDA-NRCS James E. "Bud" Smith PMC

‘Shoreline’ common reed, *Phragmites australis* [(Cal.) Trin. ex Steud], was released from the James E. “Bud” Smith Plant Materials Center in Knox City, Texas in 1978.

Description
Shoreline common reed is a rhizomatous, stoloniferous perennial, warm-season, native grass that grows 6 to 12 feet tall. The leaves are ½ to 2 inches wide. It initiates growth as early as February in some locations, and the foliage remains green until frost. The seed head is a large, often tawny or purple tinged terminal plume, with many branches and many flowers. Seed production rarely occurs in North America. The plant reproduces by rhizomes and stolons near the waterline.

Source
Shoreline was vegetatively collected from a railroad right-of-way in Lawrence, Texas.

Conservation Uses
Shoreline has many beneficial uses as a conservation plant. The most common use is to prevent wave action erosion at the waterline on ponds and earthen dams. It also provides excellent hiding cover for deer, rabbits, pheasants, and other animals. Waterfowl and shoreline birds use common reed for nesting cover. Young vegetation is readily grazed by sheep and cattle, but older, mature plants become tough and unpalatable.

Area of Adaptation and Use
Common reed is adapted to a wide range of soil conditions from coarse to fine soil types and can tolerate slight salinity. Shoreline grows in marshes, swamps, banks of streams and lakes, and around springs. It performs best in areas that receive 30 inches of precipitation per year and where the water level fluctuates a few inches below and above the soil surface.

Establishment and Management for Conservation Plantings
New sites should be worked and prepared prior to planting to provide a firm, weed-free seedbed tilled to a depth of 4 inches. Rhizomes are placed end to end in a trench 4 to 6 inches deep. A minimum of three rows, 40 inches apart, should be planted beginning at the waterline and continuing up the slope. The trench should be filled and packed immediately after planting. The planting should be kept moist but not flooded until established.

Older sites can be established by digging 6 inch holes 8 inches apart in rows 2 feet apart. One horizontal and three vertical rhizomes should be planted in each hole and immediately filled and packed the holes. The plantings should be kept moist with irrigated or pond management.

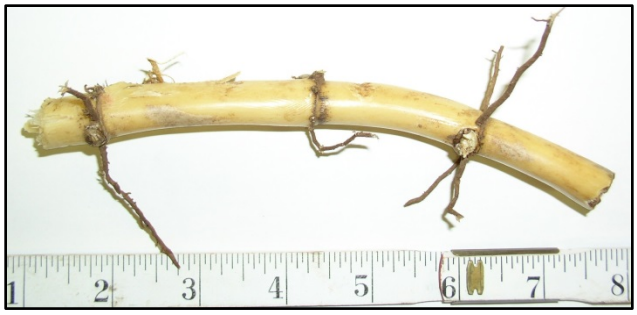
Nitrogen and phosphorus fertilizer can be applied at a rate of 50 lbs/ac to sites at seedbed preparation, but caution should be used as this will encourage weed growth as well.

Livestock should be excluded from all planting sites until shoreline is established.

Seed and Plant Production
Availability of shoreline is limited to the work required in digging rhizomes. Rhizomes can be dug after the top growth of the plant is completely dormant. A subsoiler or spiker is used to bring rhizomes to the surface. Smaller lots can also be harvested using a fork or spade. The rhizomes are then hand harvested and cut into 8 to 12 inch pieces with at least 2 good buds that are not located too close to the cut ends.

After harvest, the rhizomes should be kept cold and damp until they are transplanted. Shoreline can be stored for an extended period in areas that are 34° F and have 90% or higher humidity. If cold storage is not available, rhizomes should not be dug until immediately before planting.

Production at the James E. “Bud” Smith Plant Materials Center yielded 75,000 to 100,000 rhizomes per acre per year.



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Availability

For seed or plant increase: Foundation quality rhizomes are maintained and available from the James E. "Bud" Smith Plant Materials Center in Knox City, TX.

For more information, contact:
James E. "Bud" Smith PMC
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Knox City, TX 79529
Phone: (940) 658-3922 ext.5
Fax: (940) 658-3095
http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/main/plantmaterials/pmc/central/txpmc/

Citation

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For additional information about this and other plants, please contact your local USDA Service Center, NRCS field office, or Conservation District <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/>, and visit the PLANTS Web site <http://plants.usda.gov> or the Plant Materials Program Web site <http://www.plant-materials.nrcs.usda.gov>


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