

# *PHRAGMITES AUSTRALIS* (CAV.) *TRIN. EX STEUD.*



**Fam. Poaceae**

## DESCRIPTION

Very vigorous plant, capable of surprising growths (with stems that can exceed 5 metres in height) in the most favourable environments. It can also live in unsuitable environments with stunted populations that sometimes do not exceed one metre in height. It essentially spreads vegetatively, developing long rhizomes, with enlarged and hollow internodes, from which numerous new shoots originate.

## LEAVES

Opposite, grey-green, lanceolate and pointed leaves with a sharp margin; they are up to 5 cm wide and 30 cm long; they wrap the stem with a long sheath.

## FRUITS

They ripen around January and are quite rare.

## HABITAT

The species appears to be native to Eurasia but is widespread throughout the world.

## DISTRIBUTION

Widespread in all Italian regions.

## FLOWERS

The apex of the stem bears a brown or purplish panicle, up to 40 cm long. It germinates in March and blooms from July to September.

## STEM

Hard, flexible, torose and unbranched, the stem normally grows up to 2 metres tall but can also reach 3-4 metres.

## INTERESTING FACTS

Also known as Common reed, it grows in dense reed-beds near swamps and wetlands, on the shores of lakes, ponds, ditches and in wet uncultivated land; it tolerates a moderate level of salinity. The young shoots are edible; the stems and leaves are still used today to make thatched roofs, mats, wattles and baskets.

## ROOTS

The root system is rhizomatous and fasciculated and anchors itself firmly to the ground forming a densely-intertwined structure.

