



2019 Weed Awareness

The Weed Control Authority is responsible for implementation of the Nebraska Noxious Weed Control Act throughout Lancaster County. The authority has also provided the inspection and administration of the City of Lincoln's Weed Abatement Program since entering into an interlocal agreement with the city in 1996.



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10 Years of Growth — Not Always a Good Thing!



Mature phragmites during the growing season.



Phragmites can spread by horizontal, above-ground or above-water stolons.



Phragmites remains standing in the winter with their seed-head attached — making them easy to spot.

In most cases, we think of “growth” as a good or positive thing. Growth in our retirement is good; stock market growth makes us happy; population growth can sometimes lead to good things; when a company grows, we see it as something positive happening; but, when we see 10 years of continued growth with a noxious weed, it is **never** a good sign.

The rapid expansion of non-native phragmites has resulted in adverse ecological, economic and social impacts on the natural resources and people of Nebraska.

Phragmites *australis*, also known as common reed, became a Nebraska noxious weed on April 15, 2008. Since that time Lancaster County has been witnessing a **phragmites explosion!** The number of parcels known to have phragmites infestations grew from 71 in 2008 to 680 in 2018, resulting in an 858 percent increase over the last decade. If we continue with the same rate of growth, by the year 2028, Lancaster County would face a **full-blown epidemic** of 6,514 parcels.

Before we hit the panic button, let's take a look at how we got to this point and what the future realistically looks like. While the number of parcels infested continues to climb, most of the parcels have very small infestations that can still be eradicated. The key is learning how to identify phragmites and everyone using the best management practices available to control it.

The phragmites expansion we're seeing today would be similar to what happened in the mid-1960s and early-1970s when musk thistle was first added to Nebraska's Noxious Weed list. Records from the 1970s show there were more parcels infested with musk thistle at that time, than we have today. Once landowners recognize the

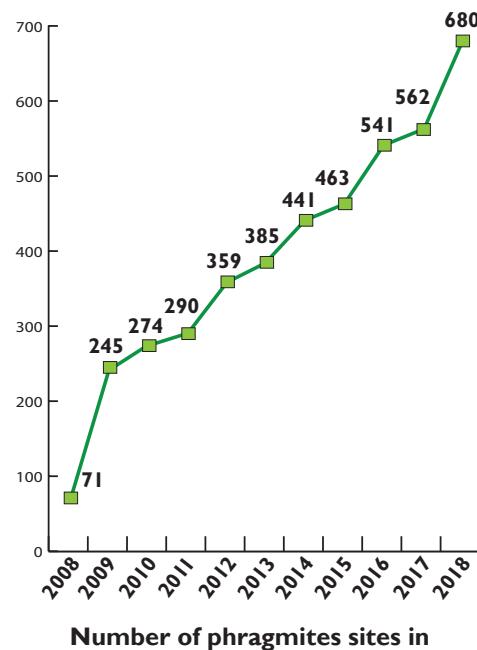
problem caused by phragmites and learn how to control it, we will start to see a reduction. It won't be easy, and it will take every landowner working together to get phragmites under control. Once this happens, our chart should level off and begin to decline.

What Is Phragmites?

Non-native phragmites, also known as common reed, is a perennial, aggressive wetland warm-season grass that outcompetes native plants and displaces native animals.

How Did Phragmites Get Here?

In the early 19th century, the non-native variety, most likely European in origin, appeared in coastal ports in the



eastern United States. The rapid spread of phragmites in the 20th century was related to the construction of railroads and major roadways, habitat disturbance, wind and animals.

What Does Phragmites Look Like?

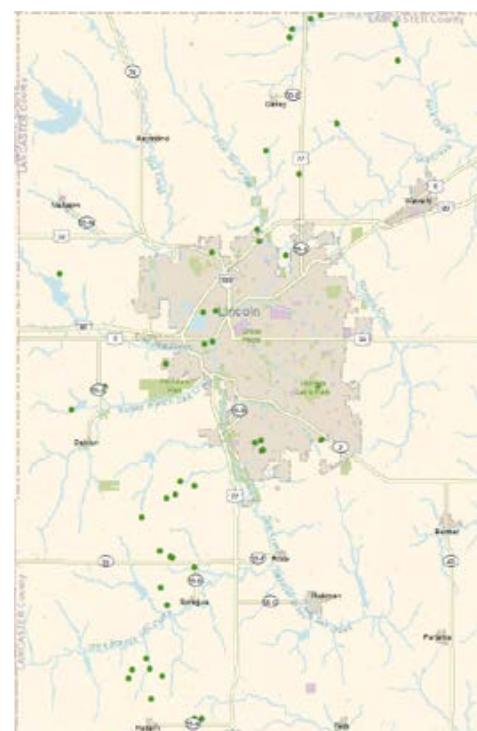
Phragmites plants range from 6 to 15 feet in height, yet 80 percent of the plant is contained below ground in a dense mass of roots and rhizomes that can penetrate the soil to a depth greater than 12 feet. In the summer, its flat, grayish-green leaves are 2–2.5 inches wide, 8–15 inches long and alternate along the stem. Phragmites

has a distinctive purple-brown seedhead with plumes appearing by late July. These feathery plumes that form at the end of stalks are 6–20 inches long and up to eight inches wide with many branches. Phragmites turns a tan color in the fall and most leaves drop off, leaving only the stalk and plume-topped shoot commonly seen throughout winter.

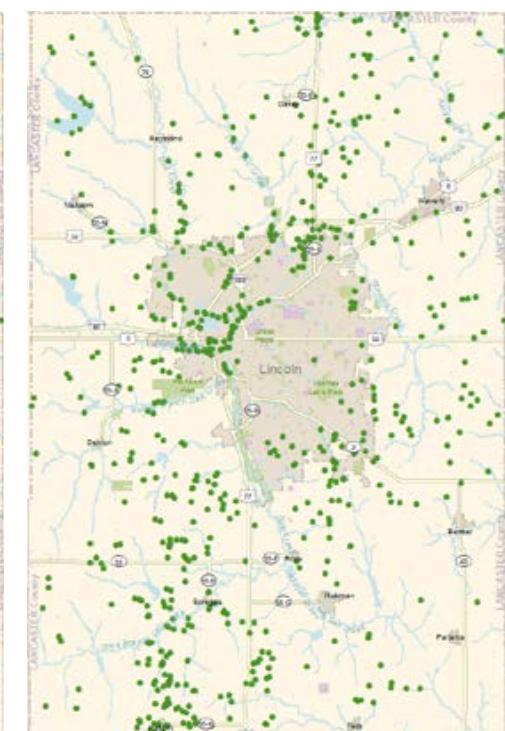
Why Should I Be Concerned?

Phragmites is becoming widespread throughout Lancaster County. Urban areas are just as susceptible as rural areas

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Locations of phragmites infestations in 2008.



Locations of phragmites infestations in 2018.

Noxious Weed Spotlight: Cutleaf and Common Teasel



Common teasel (inset photo shows flowering stage)

Early Detection Rapid Response (EDRR) is the most economical way to attack invasive weeds. Getting after the problem early is the most economical way to control invasives. The longer we wait, the more expensive it will become to eradicate.

Lancaster County designated Cutleaf teasel (*Dipsacus laciniatus* L.) and Common teasel (*Dipsacus fullonum* L.) as noxious weeds in 2014. Saline County and Johnson County have since followed our lead and have designated both teasels noxious in their counties as well. This designation requires that each landowner in Lancaster,

Saline and Johnson County is responsible for controlling teasel growing on property they own or manage.

Cutleaf or common teasel has been identified in at least 17 Nebraska counties and nine states have already declared one or both teasels as noxious — Iowa, Missouri, Minnesota and Colorado being the closest.

Description

Although usually called a biennial, teasel is better described as a monocarpic perennial. The plant grows as a basal rosette for a minimum of one year until enough

resources are acquired to send up tall flowering stalks and dies after flowering. The period of time in the rosette stage varies depending on the amount of time needed to acquire enough resources for flowering to occur.

Distribution

Teasel is native to Europe. It was introduced to North America as early as the 1700s. Common teasel was introduced for use in raising the nap of cloth. Possibly, cutleaf teasel was introduced with common teasel or introduced accidentally with other plant

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