Common Reed  
*Phragmites australis*

**Preferred habitat:** Common reed thrives in sunny wetland habitats and prefers fresh or brackish water. Although it can tolerate salt water, growth is usually stunted. It cannot withstand strong wave action or running water because the vertical stems break easily. Common reed grows in drier elevated marsh areas, but can also be found along lakeshores, riverbanks, and almost any moist area. It is particularly prevalent in disturbed or polluted soils, and can tolerate highly acidic conditions.

**Description:** Common reed is a tall perennial wetland grass, up to 15 feet in height, with a distinctive purplish-brown plume that appears in late July. The vertical stems (culms) arise from horizontal shoots that grow either above or below ground. This plant can spread (“run”) over large areas.