

Landowner's Beware - the invasive Phragmites has made its way to New Denmark

At the July monthly meeting, Assessor Gary Taicher brought to the Town Board's attention a very concerning invasive grass which has been spotted in various locations throughout the Town of New Denmark. Phragmites is a common reed grass that can grow 13 ft tall, with large coarse stems and plum like flowers. It thrives (and flourishes) in wetlands, marshes, pond edges, creeks and ditches, which makes New Denmark an ideal location for this specie to flourish and spread throughout the Neshota River valley and adjacent waterways and wetlands.

Phragmites has little if no value to wildlife and significantly reduces the diversity of plant and wildlife species once it takes hold. It is also quick to take over once water levels recede and difficult to kill once it takes hold. To identify Phragmites, all one has to do is drive along Highway 43 near the Bay Beach Wildlife Sanctuary and you will immediately become familiar with this species.

Phragmites is being brought to the Board's attention in an attempt to educate land owners about the potential liability this plant may have to your property and to offer information on how to eliminate this grass. If residents work cooperatively, we can prevent further spreading and hopefully eliminate Phragmites from our Town.

Treatment: Phragmites can be controlled through mechanical methods such as mowing or flooding however, the most effective treatment is often the spraying of herbicides such as Rodeo, Aquaneat & Aquastar (if used in or near the water) or Roundup (if being applied away from the water). The herbicide must include a nonionic surfactant which allows it to adhere to the plants leaves, stalks and rhizomes for effective control. Phragmites can be treated successfully when plants are actively growing and are mid- to full-bloom (which is typically late July through October, but before a killing frost). The herbicide should be applied at a higher concentration than typical herbicides (for example at a rate of 4-6 pints per acre). Be sure to follow the dilution and surfactant rates prescribed on the label to achieve maximum effectiveness. Enough herbicide should be applied to wet the plant but avoid runoff. Phragmites will die within 6-8 weeks of treatment. Dead Phragmites cane should be left on site to prevent further spreading of the seed. In a heavily infested area, some re-growth may occur. For best results, the same area should be sprayed in two successive years, and then spot treated in the succeeding year to prevent reestablishment. Roundup and Rodeo can be purchased at the Denmark Co-op Services and they can provide assistance with the correct concentration ratio.

As property owners, if everyone takes an active approach to preventing the invasion of Phragmites on their property now, we will make huge strides in preventing the spread of Phragmites into the Neshota River valley and the surrounding waterways for future generations. (Please see the photograph on the next page to help identify Phragmites)