

Invasive Plants in Pennsylvania

Hybrid cattail

Typha x glauca



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Background:

It is believed that this is a cross between the European introduced narrow-leaved cattail (*Typhus angustifolia*) and the native common cattail (*Typha latifolia*).

Range:

Originally native to Europe, this species can now be found in almost every U.S. state. Data suggests that it is widespread across PA, though in a minority of the counties.

Habitat:

This species prefers wetland habitats, such as marshes, sedge meadows, and riparian areas. It also inhabits areas periodically flooded, such as roadside ditches, canals, and stormwater retention basins.

Description:

This hybrid cattail typically grows five to ten feet tall, with long, stiff leaves 0.3" to 0.8" inches in width. Flowers form a dense cylindrical "spike" at the top of the plant and typically the male flowers are yellow in the upper section with a lower, separated, brown female, sausage-shaped flower.

Biology and Spread:

Seeds are small, dry and wind dispersed. One plant can produce between 20,000– 700,000 fruits per year. In addition, this species is rhizomatous, forming clones that can spread laterally up to 8 meters per year. This species quickly spreads in open, wet mineral soils and can quickly out-compete native plants in aquatic, wetland habitats, creating mono-specific invasive cattail stands.

Look-a-likes:

This species looks very similar to the native common cattail (*Typha latifolia*), but the common cattail has wider leaves (1/2 to 1 inch wide) and no gap exists on the stem between male and female flowers. It also closely resembles the narrow-leaved cattail. Narrow-leaved cattail is typically shorter at three to five feet in height, with long, stiff leaves (1/4 to 1/2 inch in width).

How to Control this Species:

Often if water levels can be manipulated in conjunction with cutting or mechanical removal, this species can be controlled.

Treatment with chemical control agents is possible; however extreme care must be taken in applying herbicides to wetland habitats. Fire has been used to control narrow-leaved cattail, but rhizomes must be burned or re-sprouting following fire will occur.

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Central Lake Ontario Conservation