Invasive Plants in Pennsylvania

Hybrid cattail

*Typha x glauca*

**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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**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.

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*Central Lake Ontario Conservation*