

Phragmites:

Distinguishing the native from the non-native form



Michigan
Natural
Features
Inventory

Characteristics

	Native	Non-native
Stem color	shiny reddish	dull tan
Leaf persistence	fall off easily	persists
Ligule length	0.4-1.0 mm	0.1-0.4 mm
Lower glume length	4-7 mm	2.6-4.2 mm
Habit	scattered stems	dense stands
Habitats	fens, sedge meadows shorelines	ditches, disturbed sites, saline habitats, Great Lakes shores

Characteristics

Native

Stem color

shiny reddish



smooth

Non-native

dull tan



ridges
(usually)

Characteristics

Native

Winter Stem color

shiny tan



smooth

Non-native

dull tan



ridges
(usually)

Characteristics

Native

Leaf persistence

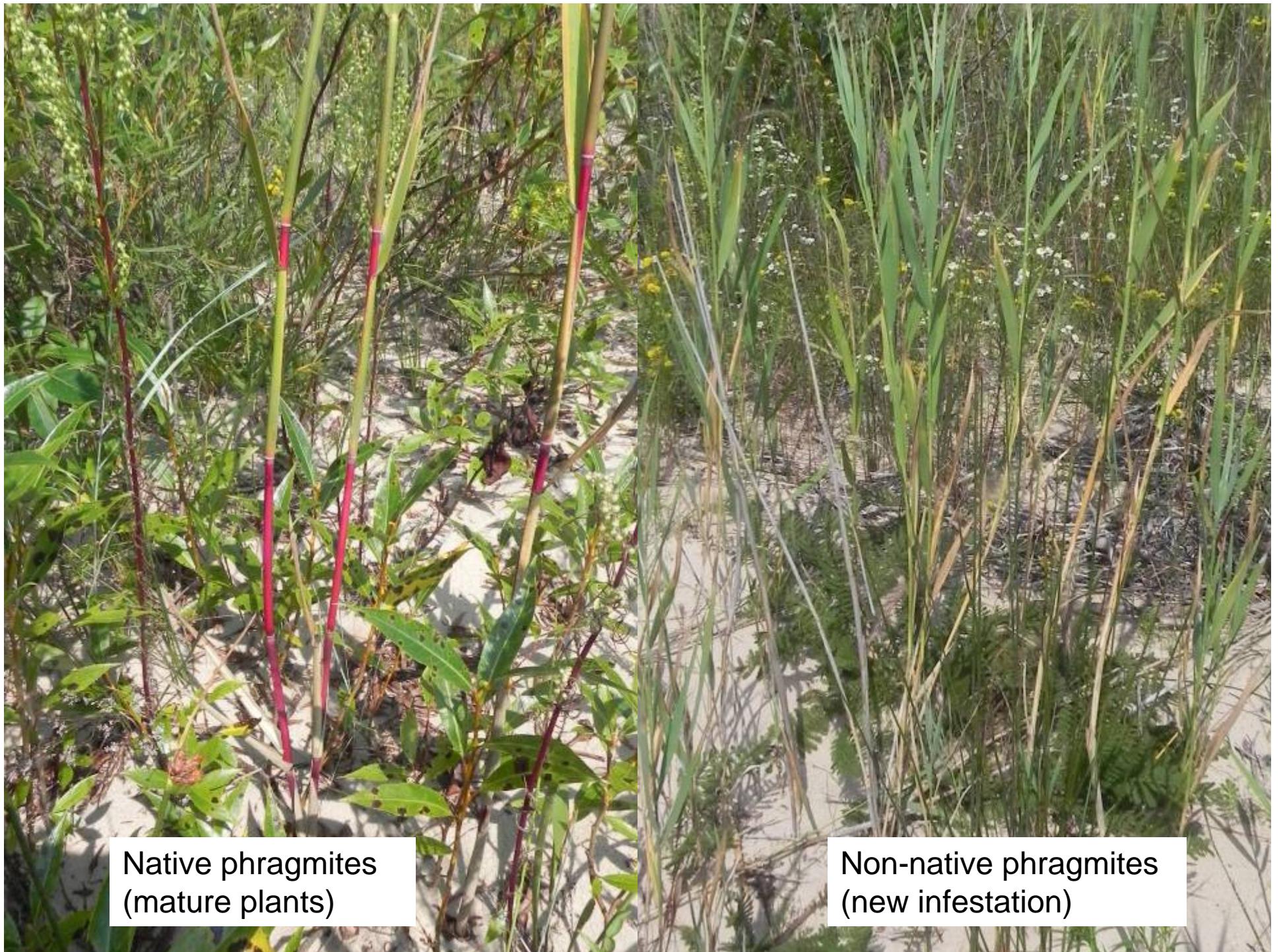
falls off easily



Non-native

persists





Native phragmites
(mature plants)

Non-native phragmites
(new infestation)

Characteristics

Native

Leaf color

yellowish green



Non-native

bluish-gray green



Characteristics

Native

Ligule length
(excluding fringe)

0.4-1.0 mm



Non-native

0.1-0.4 mm



* May deteriorate
later in season

Characteristics

Native

Lower glume length

4-7 mm



Non-native

2.6-4.2 mm

Characteristics

Native

Habit

(Mature populations)

scattered stems



Non-native

dense stands





Other plants grow below the native (old stems break down)



Too dense for other plants below (old stems persist)

Characteristics

	Native	Non-native
Habit	scattered stems	scattered stems?
Compare:	 A photograph showing a field of tall grasses and small yellow flowers, with a dense treeline in the background. A red horizontal line with a circular endpoint points to the right side of the image, indicating a 'new infestation' area.	 A photograph showing a dense, continuous stand of tall grasses along a shoreline. A red horizontal line with a circular endpoint points to the right side of the image, indicating a 'new infestation' area.



seedheads

red stems →



Seedhead

Ripens

Native

earlier



Non-native

later



Seedhead

Native

Size

delicate, open



Non-native

heavier, full



Runners (mostly non-native)



