

Reed, *aqraban hajna*, *ghab*

GENERAL

Origin	: temperate, arid, sub-arctic, sub-Mediterranean, Mediterranean, sub-tropical
Vigour	: fast growing
Humidity	: semi-arid, semi-humid
Propagation	: division, direct sowing
Maintenance	: high

CONDITIONS

Urban climate	: resistant
Dessication	: resistant
Stagnant water	: resistant
Irrigation	: high
Salinity/ppm	: very high (20000 ppm)
Hardiness	: -25°C, heat tolerant

SHAPE

Type	: grasses
Height	: 0.9 m-2.5 m
Spread	: 1 m-3 m
Foliage	: deciduous

FLOWER

Colour	: violet, magenta, black, white
Size	: 25 cm
Period	: September - October

FRUIT

Type of fruit	: caryopsis
Fruit size	: 1 cm

The common name for this plant is Reed Grass, or in Arabic, ghab. Its area of distribution ranges from Alaska and Australia to the Balkans. Phragmites is a perennial grass which is both heat- and frost-tolerant. It grows to a height of between 90 cm and 2.5 metres. It is a fast-growing grass with strong rhizomes. It can be invasive in situations where all conditions are optimal for its development. It can also withstand high salinity. The flowers appear as impressive florets between 20 and 35 cm in size. The spike has a violet-magenta colour. The inflorescence appears in early September and remains on the plant for a long time, keeping the grass attractive throughout the winter. Reed Grass grows close to water edges, on shorelines. Phragmites is well known in the Wadi Hanifah and the Al Hair Lakes. Because it is such a strong plant, its use is not advisable for small ponds. For natural water features such as the Al Hair Lakes, however, it is a valuable plant species because of its water-cleansing properties. It helps to maintain the natural water ecosystem in equilibrium. Reed Grass is a phytoremediation or water-treatment plant, and provides a habitat for many different varieties of wildlife. Accordingly, Phragmites is a useful plant for bank stabilisation, open country and environmental consolidation. It can also be used as screen. It becomes a dominant plant very quickly. Recommended propagation measures are by runners, division and direct sowing. Maintenance is recommended through periodically pruning where necessary.

