

Arundo, Giant Cane, ghab

GENERAL

Origin	: Mediterranean
Vigour	: fast growing
Humidity	: semi-arid, very humid
Propagation	: cuttings, division
Maintenance	: high

CONDITIONS

Urban climate	: resistant
Dessication	: vulnerable
Stagnant water	: resistant
Irrigation	: medium
Salinity/ppm	: high (4500 ppm)
Hardiness	: -12°C

SHAPE

Type	: perennial
Height	: 2 m-6 m
Spread	: 2 m-6 m
Foliage	: evergreen, semi-evergreen

FLOWER

Colour	: pastel yellow
Size	: 30 cm - 60 cm
Period	: September - December

FRUIT

Type of fruit	: achene
Fruit size	: 1.8 cm

Giant Cane, or ghab in Arabic, is a perennial grass which grows in both wet soils, primarily along watercourses, and relatively dry locations, where the conditions can be either fresh or moderately saline. Originally from Asia, it has been cultivated for thousands of years in southern Europe, northern Africa and the Middle East. It is often seen in the Arriyadh region growing on the banks of small ponds or where there are culvert outfalls. *A. donax* can reach a height of up to 6 metres. The long, straight leaves are a lush green, and the flowers appear in late summer as feathery plumes, which are of a high aesthetic value in the wind when the sun shines through them from behind. Its rhizomes can spread invasively and create dense mats; the roots reach a depth of 1 metre. A small piece, split off the root mass, will root again further downstream, establishing a new plant. The plant is well adapted to floods and is easily propagated by rhizomes or seeds. The grass stems contain silica making them strong and flexible. They are also hollow and can be used as fishing rods and walking sticks, as well as for flutes. *A. donax* can be planted on the edges of lakes and ponds, watercourses or as a slope stabilizer. It is also used for wind shelter plantations or as a screen. Considerable maintenance measures are required where the plant has grown vigorously and the roots have become invasive; mechanical force is then necessary to reduce the stand.

