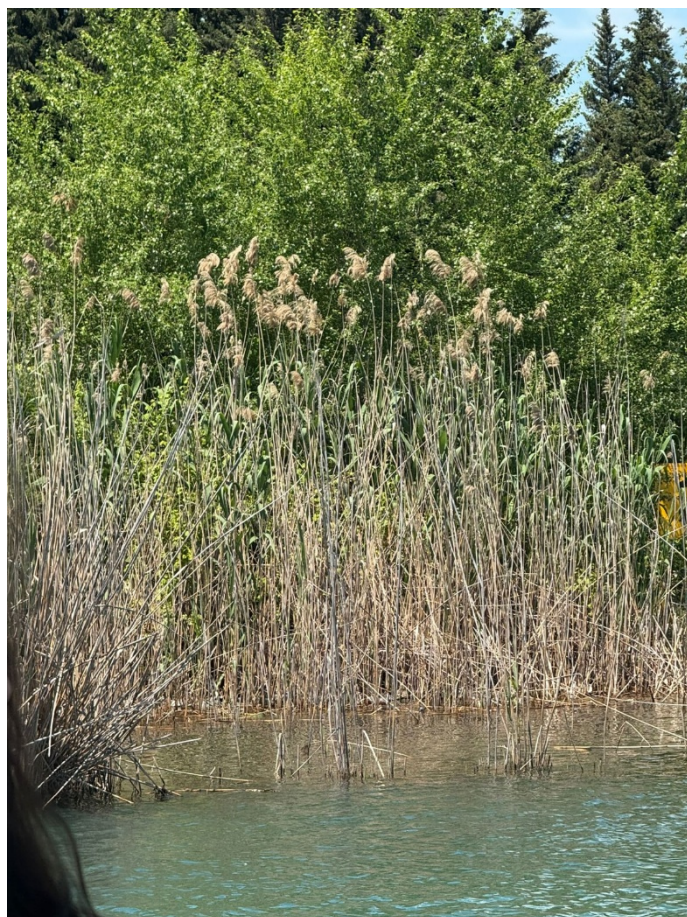


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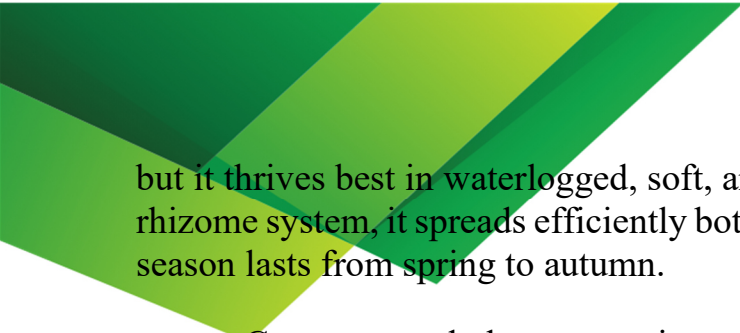
## Common Reed (*Phragmites australis*)

Common reed (*Phragmites australis*) is a perennial, tall wetland plant belonging to the grass family (Poaceae). This plant spreads rapidly through its dense root system and underground rhizomes, forming extensive reed beds. Its height usually ranges from 1.5 to 4 meters, although it can grow even taller under favorable conditions. The stem is upright, hollow, and rigid in structure. Its leaves are long, narrow, and sharp-edged. The flowers appear during summer in the form of large feathery panicles and are pollinated by wind.



*Phragmites australis* is a cosmopolitan species distributed throughout most temperate and subtropical regions of the world. It commonly forms dense reed stands along riverbanks, lakes, marshes, and irrigation canals. In Azerbaijan, it is widely found in the Kur–Araz lowland, along the Caspian Sea coast, and around various water bodies. The plant plays an important role in both natural and semi-artificial aquatic ecosystems.

Common reed prefers moist and water-rich environments. It grows especially well in marshes, shallow waters, and along riverbanks. It develops more rapidly in sunny areas. The plant is not highly selective regarding soil type,



but it thrives best in waterlogged, soft, and sediment-rich soils. Thanks to its strong rhizome system, it spreads efficiently both in water and along shorelines. Its growing season lasts from spring to autumn.

Common reed plays a very important ecological role. It stabilizes shorelines and helps prevent erosion. It also contributes to water purification by acting as a natural filter. In addition, reed beds provide habitat and nesting areas for many bird species and aquatic animals. For humans, the plant has various practical uses as well. Reed-growing areas serve as a source of natural materials used in construction and handicrafts. However, in some cases, the plant may spread excessively, clogging waterways and creating problems for agriculture.

*Phragmites australis* is mainly used in construction and household applications. Reeds are used to make roof coverings, fences, lightweight structures, and various handicrafts. They have also been utilized as raw material for cellulose and paper production. In ecological engineering, reeds are used in the creation of artificial wetlands and wastewater treatment systems. In some cases, dried reeds are also included in livestock feed mixtures.

One of the most interesting features of common reed is its ability to survive both in water and on dry land. This gives it remarkable ecological adaptability. Another interesting fact is that in ancient times reeds were used to make writing tools, musical instruments, and even simple buildings. Overall, *Phragmites australis* is one of the key plant species shaping wetland ecosystems and holds great ecological as well as economic importance.

