



# COMMON CORDGRASS

*Spartina anglica*



- \* Common cordgrass is a Class A noxious weed
- \* Common cordgrass is an herbaceous perennial grass in the Graminae Family that can spread by seed, rhizomes, tillering and rhizome fragments.
- \* *Spartina anglica* is a stout, rhizomatous salt marsh grass. The stiff plant grows from 1 to 3 ½ feet tall. Young green shoots and leaf sheaths are often streaked with red, or purple just below the sediment surface. Leaves are flat and smooth on both upper and lower surfaces tapering to a small sharp tip with concave sides just before the tip. Leaf ligules are a fringe of hairs up to 1/3" long. Flowers occur in clusters, consisting of

overlapping spikelets in two rows, on only one side of the stem (rachis).

- \* Common cordgrass usually flowers after 1 or 2 years, in late July to September. Ripe seeds fall from October to January. Vegetative fragments may spread year round.
- \* Seeds are spread by wind and water currents, but can also spread vegetatively by rhizomes and fragments that break off and move downstream.
- \* This cordgrass, like other non-native species of *Spartina*, traps sediment, builds marshes from the edge out, and overgrows native vegetation. It alters the native ecosystem and produces monocultures that have much less value as habitat for feeding and roosting of shorebirds and other wildlife, than native marsh flora.
- \* Loss of beach habitat, navigation routes and reduced water access result from the spread of *Spartina*. Therefore, activities, such as fishing, hunting, boating, bird watching, botanizing, and shellfish harvesting are also negatively impacted.
- \* Common cordgrass is found in intertidal estuarine habitats like coastal, or bayside marshes and mud flats where it forms dense clumps often creating large, near monocultures.





## CONTROL OPTIONS

\* Pulling out seedlings is an effective method of control. Care must be taken to remove both shoots and roots. Once the plant begins to put forth new shoots, hand-pulling may break off portions of root, allowing the plant to re-sprout. Seedlings generally begin this process late in their first growing season. Repeated pulling will eventually kill small plants

\* Mowing infestations can contain growth, limit seed set, and eventually kill the plants. To be effective, clones must be mowed repeatedly, beginning with initial spring green-up and continued until fall die-back. For clones under 10

feet in diameter, one to three mowings during the growing season may be effective.

- \* Dikes can be used to contain and confine the lateral spread of rhizomes. Dikes also remove tidal action which deprives the plants of nutrient flow and oxygen exchange. They can also be used to flood an infestation area which will eventually kill the plants.
- \* Since Smooth Cordgrass is found in aquatic areas, the use of an herbicide formulated for aquatic settings is required. **Please note that aquatic herbicides are restricted for use in Washington State to licensed applicators only.**

