



THE SOUTH BETHANY PHRAGMITES CONTROL PROGRAM

Phragmites – An Invasive Species

What is Phragmites? (pronounced frag-mi-tees)

Phragmites australis is a perennial non-native grass that grows in dense stands up to 12 feet in height. Also known as Common Reed, this plant can be found worldwide. It is an aggressive invader of wetland areas particularly where the soil has been disturbed or exposed. Dense stands of Phragmites crowd out native wetland plants and provide little or no value to wildlife. The plant is easily recognized by its large plumed flower head that persists throughout the winter.

Why is Phragmites a Threat?

The reed chokes out other plants that would be beneficial to wild life, particularly water fowl, and the conditions of the wetlands. Its complex root system spreads by means of underground stems that produce new shoots. Eventually it will take over your garden area, choking your flowers and bushes. In addition, thick stands of Phragmites pose a significant wildfire threat to communities. During winter months, the grass becomes extremely dry and can become a fire hazard. Many communities, including South Bethany, have ordinances (SB Ordinance Chapter 104-12) prohibiting the growth of invasive vegetation such as Phragmites on homeowners' properties.

Partnering with the Delaware Forest Service

Through an invasive species grant with DFS's Urban and Community Forestry Program, South Bethany will join other coastal communities in their efforts to target and remove specific Phragmites infested areas to help improve weed management, promote the growth of native plants, and reduce the possibility of wildfire. DFS's goal is to have one large "coastal Phragmites control area."

Phragmites in South Bethany

Some South Bethany property owners are already familiar with Phragmites and its invasive nature while many of us have perhaps seen it but just assumed that it is some kind of native grass growing in our yard or nearby. The photographs included on this flyer will help you recognize this invasive species. Phragmites can quickly become an over-bearing part of your landscape if not sprayed, cut, or pulled out. Even after cutting it back, Phragmites will re-bloom in the spring and continue to spread.

South Bethany's partnership and grant funding from DFS will allow South Bethany to hire a licensed contractor (Envirotech) to hand spray in specific locations around our town, especially where we see its growth increasing such as the dune swale along the oceanfront; along Canal Road adjacent to the Wetlands; and Tamarack Drive, Cattail Road, and Black Gum Road in the Cat Hill section of SB. Per Envirotech, hand spraying limits impact on non-targeted plants. In addition, if you have identified this invasive plant in your yard, with homeowner permission and a signed release, the contractor can hand spray the Phragmites on your property. It will be up to you to remove the plant once it has died. Treatment occurs during the growing season (June – September) and Rodeo (Glyphosate), an aquatic safe herbicide and approved surfactant, will be utilized to treat the targeted species. Any areas treated can be re-entered after the chemical has dried (usually 2 to 4 hours). Quantities and spraying guidelines are set by the Department of Agriculture. All spraying will be done this fall by licensed aquatic pesticide applicators.

For Additional Information

Please contact Melvin Cusick at townmanager@southbethany.org or 302-539-3653 x 213 for additional information. If you are interested in participating in this Phragmites control effort, signed releases must be received by **September 5, 2012**.

The Community Enhancement Committee thanks you for your support.



Phragmites
encroaching on a
landscaped garden.



Phragmites in the Cat Hill area.



Phragmites on ocean front properties.





HOLD HARMLESS AGREEMENT South Bethany Phragmites Control Program

I, _____, do hereby agree to allow the Town of South Bethany, staff of the Delaware Forest Service and/or cooperating contractors to enter my property located at _____ for the purpose of controlling the invasive weed *Phragmites australis* by any means deemed necessary for the South Bethany Phragmites Control Program.

Said invasive weeds are those named by both the State of Delaware and by the Town of South Bethany Property Maintenance Code-Chapter 104, Paragraph 104-12. Treatment includes applying herbicides at the recommended labeled rates and in accordance with all label directions under the direction of licensed, certified commercial applicators; hand pulling or chopping, or other accepted weed control methods.

I agree to hold harmless, release and discharge, the above named groups from any and all losses, damages, costs, expenses, liabilities, obligations, fines, penalties, actions, judgments, suits and causes of action, claims, demands and proceedings of any kind or description whatsoever that, directly or indirectly, arise while they are applying weed treatments on my property.

I understand that the intention for this weed control is for the benefit of myself, my property, and the Town of South Bethany.

Signed _____ Date _____

Landowner or his/her representative

Phone No.: _____

Return form to Town Hall by September 5, 2012:

1. Fax: 302-539-7576
2. Email: townhall@southbethany.org
3. Mail: Town of South Bethany, 402 Evergreen Road, South Bethany, DE 19930