

*Phalaris arundinacea*

[Synonyms : *Arundo colorata*, *Arundo riparia*, *Baldingera arundinacea*, *Baldingera arundinacea* var. *picta*, *Baldingera arundinacea* var. *rotgesii*, *Baldingera colorata*, *Calamagrostis colorata*, *Calamagrostis variegata*, *Digraphis americana*, *Digraphis arundinacea*, *Endallex arundinaceae*, *Endallex arundinacea*, *Phalaridantha arundinacea*, *Phalaris arundinacea* fo. *coarctata*, *Phalaris arundinacea* var. *colorata*, *Phalaris arundinacea* var. *genuina*, *Phalaris arundinacea* var. *japonica*, *Phalaris arundinacea* var. *latifolia*, *Phalaris arundinacea* var. *leioclada*, *Phalaris arundinacea* fo. *luteo-picta*, *Phalaris arundinacea* fo. *minor*, *Phalaris arundinacea* subsp. *oehlerii*, *Phalaris arundinacea* fo. *pallens*, *Phalaris arundinacea* fo. *pallida*, *Phalaris arundinacea* var. *picta*, *Phalaris arundinacea* fo. *ramifera*, *Phalaris arundinacea* fo. *ramosa*, *Phalaris arundinacea* race. *rotgesii*, *Phalaris arundinacea* var. *thyrsoides*, *Phalaris arundinacea* subsp. *typica*, *Phalaris arundinacea* var. *variegata*, *Phalaris caesia*, *Phalaris hispanica*, *Phalaris japonica*, *Phalaris rotgesii*, *Phalaroides arundinacea*, *Phalaroides arundinacea* var. *picta*, *Typhoides arundinacea*]

**REED CANARYGRASS** is an evergreen perennial grass. Native to northern temperate regions it has tiny greenish, purplish or whitish-green spikelets.

It is also known as *Aiguillette d'armes* (French), *Alpiste-roseau* (French, Swiss), Annual canarygrass, *Baldingère faux roseau* (French), Bride's laces, *Caniço-malhado* (Portuguese), *Cao lu* (Chinese), *Chafurit avkane* (Hebrew), *Chrastica trst'ovitá* (Slovak), *Chrastice rákosovitá* (Czech), *Falaride arundinacea* (Italian), *Falarido arunda* (Esperanto), *Falaris de los banados* (Argentine), French grass, Gardeners' garters, *Glanzgras* (German), *Gwyran* (Welsh), *Harilik paelrohi* (Estonian), *Hierba cinta* (Spanish), *Kanareecnik trostnikovyj* (Russian), *Kusa yoshi* (Japanese), Lady grass, Lady's garters, Lady's laces, Lady's ribbons, *Lesknice rákosovitá* (Czech), *Mozga trzciniowata* (Polish), *Pasto cinto* (Spanish), *Phalaris roseau* (French), Reed grass, *Riban* (Channel Islander-Jersey Norman-French), Ribbon grass, *Rietgras* (Danish), *Rietkanariegras* (Afrikaans), *Rohr-Glanzgras* (German), *Rörflen* (Swedish), *Rørgraes* (Danish), *Ruokohelpi* (Finnish), Silver grass, Spear grass, *Strandrør* (Norwegian), Switchgrass, *Trstikasta pisanka* (Serbian), Variegated grass, Variegated ribbon grass, *Viiruhelpi* (Finnish), and *Yem kanyasi* (Turkish).

The flowers are pollinated by the wind. The seeds shatter easily when mature and for that reason seed heads are often harvested still by hand.

This grass can be invasive and is viewed as a weed in many countries, including Hungary, Poland, Afghanistan, Japan, Korea, Mauritius, Indonesia and New Zealand, as well as parts of North America. It has been declared a noxious weed in Washington state in the north-western United States.

*Arundinacea* is derived from Latin *arundo* (reed) meaning 'reed-like'.

The grass was familiar to the Okanagan-Colville North American Indian tribe whose doctors wore a peaked hat woven from it. It was also made into mats on which they dried harvested berries and from which they also ate – and their fishermen used it to make dams for catching fish.

It is interesting that some authorities note Swedish reliance upon it as a source of forage from at least 1749 – and that so much seed used now could well have been introduced originally from Sweden. This seed is one of the commercial birdseeds sold today. As pasture it is still held to be popular at the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century in Canada and the Pacific north-west where it can be cut for hay too. Today there is some interest in delayed-harvesting as this yields dry storable fibrous matter that researchers believe could be suitable for bioenergy production or for use by the pulp or paper industries.

Reed canarygrass provides food and cover for many animals (including rabbits and some deer), fish and birds (of the latter especially small ones). Hay fields have been established for specifically geese to graze as they migrate. In the United States the young grass is said to offer good forage for sheep, cattle and horses. Some pheasants and ducks also view the grass as desirable habitat in upland areas.

It is found in south-eastern Asia where specialists suggest that its value there is principally as an animal feed plant. Its secondary uses range widely from shade and coverplant to agricultural mulches and manures – and also as an ornamental species.

Today the grass is often actively cultivated and encouraged on riverbanks as it is relatively tolerant of flooding and provides a root system which helps to counter erosion. It has also been used in controlling water pollution from sewage effluent.

Some authorities have noted that reed canarygrass was a popular ornamental plant during the British Victorian era in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century and was also cultivated as ground cover then.

Medicinally, the leaves were once used for treatments by local herbalists..