

How to remove Arundo.

Despite the serious threat that Arundo poses to our streams, it can be controlled. Many areas in our watershed have small or mid-sized Arundo infestations that can be eliminated now before they become huge problems. Larger infestations can be controlled, but such efforts are costly and usually require coordination among multiple stakeholders. The easiest and most economical way to control Arundo is to treat it early before it becomes well established.



Volunteers work on eradicating Arundo from San Ramon Creek.

In our watershed, an effective approach is to do an initial cutting and complete removal of cut stems from the creek in early summer. The Arundo will send up new shoots, which can be hand-sprayed with an approved herbicide by autumn (or cut and removed again). Treatment needs to be repeated at least annually until the infestation is gone. Each time the infestation should be smaller and the task easier. Permits may be required, so it is best to consult with your local creek group.

After Arundo removal, replant with native plants. Recommendation of specific native plants will vary upon location. Consult the Streamside Management Program for Landowners in Contra Costa County at custreams@gmail.com, or 510-932-2370.

What you can do to help.

- ▶ Learn more about Arundo and how to identify it.
- ▶ Report sightings of Arundo to a local conservation group or agency.
- ▶ Join local eradication efforts already underway or help to start one. Talk to your neighbors to organize a workday or to share costs for a contractor.
- ▶ Join or start a local creek group. Four groups working in our watershed are:
 - ~ Friends of the Creeks (Walnut Creek)
<http://www.friendsofthecreeks.org>
 - ~ Friends of San Ramon Creek
<https://www.ccrd.org/fosrc.html>
 - ~ Friends of Pleasant Hill Creeks
<http://www.pleasanthillcreeks.org>
 - ~ Lafayette Creeks Committee
<https://www.lovelafayette.org/city-hall/commissions-committees/creeks-committee>

If you own land along a creek, there is a lot you can do to improve the health of your creek and the value of your property. Contact your local Friends group or the Walnut Creek Watershed Council for their advice and possible assistance.

For more information visit: www.ccrd/wcwc

Special acknowledgement is given to the Sonoma Ecology Center's 2008 brochure, which was used in preparing this 2019 brochure.



ARUNDO

Creek Invader!

Help protect our local creeks by removing invasive Arundo and by planting natives.



What is Arundo?

Arundo (*Arundo donax*) is an invasive non-native plant with stems that resemble bamboo and leaves that resemble corn. Also called giant reed or giant cane, it is a fast-growing plant that can grow four inches per day and up to thirty feet tall. To sustain its rapid growth, Arundo consumes prodigious amounts of water usually along streams and other waterways. It displaces native plants and provides little food or habitat for insects, birds, or other wildlife.



Rooting occurs when Arundo canes dip into water.

Arundo was introduced into the Americas by early European immigrants and used as a thatched roofing material. Later it was planted along streams in the belief it would prevent erosion, but proved a poor choice: it soon grew out of control and became a flood and fire hazard. Arundo is listed as a noxious weed in California and Texas.



Arundo is one of the fastest growing land plants in the world, out-competing slower growing natives.

Arundo is aggressively invading our streams, creating erosion and flooding problems.

It spreads quickly, even into thickly vegetated areas, and crowds out existing plants. Even though the seeds are not generally viable, when sections of the stem or root break off, they float downstream to start new colonies. New shoots can occur at any of the plant's nodes; rooting can take place when a cane droops and comes into contact with water (see photo above). Rhizomes at soil level store energy for re-growth and provide another means for propagation.

Arundo infestations can reduce a rich riparian (streamside) ecosystem to a monoculture of Arundo by out-competing native plants. Arundo infestations contribute to erosion in various ways. Its shallow roots are easily undercut by streamflow. The roots then break off from streambanks and take soil with them. Large Arundo infestations can encroach on the waterway, diverting water into the opposite bank to cause additional erosion. Clumps of Arundo can float downstream and clog culverts and channels, eventually leading to flooding.

Arundo and fire make a dangerous combination.

Arundo is highly flammable and burns even when green. When Arundo carries fire into a waterway, nearby trees are killed and nearby buildings may be destroyed. After a fire, Arundo grows



back rapidly from its rhizomes, thicker than before, and with little or no competition from other plants. Arundo transforms the naturally fire-resistant buffers of native plants along our waterways into potential threats to our environment and our homes.

Arundo destroys fish and wildlife habitat.

Riparian corridors in urban areas are our richest ecological communities and support an incredibly diverse number of plants and animals. Numerous bird, fish, reptile, and amphibian species that depend on riparian areas are declining. Arundo contributes to the loss of this habitat by displacing native plants that provide food, shelter, and breeding habitat for fish and wildlife.



A stand of Arundo diverted this portion of San Ramon Creek from its natural channel.