










Treatment	Effect	Should use	Could use	Should not use	Comments
 Burning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Removes biomass and litter; may kill seeds on soil Reduces available nitrogen over multiple burns Releases seed bank of desirable/undesirable species Stimulates dormant buds of RCG, rhizomes re-sprout Can jumpstart growing season by warming soil 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To reduce RCG in late spring after RCG is active but before natives break dormancy To force RCG to re-sprout and use reserves from rhizomes Use in combination with other practices 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To remove thatch prior to a planting/seeding of desirable natives To remove thatch and prompt early spring sprouting of RCG, which can then be treated with glyphosate or sethoxydim 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In fall to control RCG in short term; RCG benefits from high light conditions after fire In early spring in mixed vegetation sites; RCG growth is encouraged by increased light, unless you plan to combine with another treatment On organic sites if very dry 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Jumpstart occurs if burn done in fall or spring No research on critical density of RCG that can be controlled by burning alone Early burns will stimulate RCG; timing and frequency critical
 Excavation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Removes rhizomes and seed bank Removes sediment and nutrients Alters hydrology 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Where material can be pushed to fill drainage ditches or where it can be moved off site; where deeper water is desired During winter, to reduce soil compaction During summer when wet sites are dry 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To remove alluvium over native wetland soils 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> If there is no soil disposal site. If compaction is an issue If you don't want a deep-water marsh. If there is a high-quality remnant plant community in area 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> May cause soil compaction RCG will rapidly re-colonize disposed soil; use caution when selecting a disposal site Additional treatments will be necessary on drier sites Seed with natives afterwards, except in the deepest water, or if a rich native seed bank exists May require special permits
 Tree/shrub planting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> When woody species overtop RCG, shade slows its growth May change plant community Adds structure to habitat 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Where herbaceous vegetation cannot gain a competitive advantage 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Where landscape is receiving RCG seed inputs Where inflows can't be diverted To connect existing woody patches 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Where management goal is to maintain grassland habitat 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Apply herbicide/mulch around newly planted trees/shrubs Conifers may be the most effective at shading RCG Need to control RCG for 3-5 years to allow trees to establish
 Grazing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduces biomass in spring Causes disturbance Allows seedling establishment (good/bad) Adds nutrients to system 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In highly disturbed sites to reduce RCG biomass In fall, after a prescribed burn (RCG regrowth more palatable) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To reduce biomass and height before herbicide treatment To reduce seed production Lightly, to sustain diversity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> During wet conditions in spring where trampling and compaction can damage a site If there is a high-quality remnant plant community in area 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Effective at suppression only Use proper stocking rates to prevent overgrazing of desirable species
 Mowing & harvesting (hay)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Removes biomass and nutrients Reduces RCG height Similar to fire (promotes seed establishment, stimulates plant growth by increasing light) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To reduce biomass before herbicide treatment To remove P from site Before RCG seed heads appear To prepare for herbicide application 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As a substitute for fire (though not quite the same) To change fire behavior by reducing fuel height 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Where tussocks and microtopography will be damaged When grassland bird nesting habitat will be impacted. If site is too wet for equipment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> On high quality sites, avoid use during growing season Mow before RCG seed heads appear (boot to late boot stage)* to prevent seed production
 Mowing without harvesting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduces RCG height Increases light—promotes competition Depletes rhizome reserves Creates dry biomass for fire 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To prepare for herbicide application To stress RCG When harvesting equipment is unavailable 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To change fire behavior by reducing fuel height 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Where tussocks and microtopography will be damaged When grassland bird nesting habitat will be impacted. If site is too wet for mower 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mow before RCG seed heads appear (boot to late boot stage)* to prevent seed production May impede establishment of natives, due to remaining mat of vegetation
 Herbicide: broad spectrum (i.e. glyphosate, imazapyr)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduces plant height Increases light—promotes competition Depletes rhizome reserves Creates dry biomass for fire 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> On sites without native plants prior to reseeding. To dry out RCG in order to burn In late summer for maximum translocation to roots 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> For treating clones within areas of natives As an initial herbicide treatment on monotypic stands of RCG If RCG height precludes use of other herbicides In early spring or late fall, when RCG is live, but other plants dormant On wet sites, with a surfactant approved for aquatic use 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> On sites with desirable native plants actively growing Soon after mowing/burning When amphibians are on site (unless using Rodeo + a surfactant approved for aquatic use, as Roundup formulation can have negative effects on amphibians) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Should be part of a continued control strategy, where natives are later introduced Multiple treatments may be necessary May need a permit for application on wetlands Rhizome translocation less effective if temperature >70°F Other treatments may influence herbicide effectiveness Add ammonium sulfate to tank mix if water is hard
 Herbicide: grass-specific (i.e. sethoxydim or fluazifop)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Suppresses growth of most grasses Releases native plant community (except for grasses) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> On sites with desirable, native, non-grass species When active growth resumes after burning/mowing, when RCG is 6-12" tall 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Following other herbicide treatments to control residual or re-emerging RCG 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> For immediate eradication If standing water is present On sites with desirable grasses When RCG is >12" tall 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Apply with surfactant/crop oil > one treatment required Effectiveness of sethoxydim is reduced by UV light Add a water conditioner or acidifier if water is hard
 Tillage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Exposes rhizomes to light; might activate dormant buds Fragments rhizomes and may increase RCG density Can contribute to erosion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In combination with herbicide treatment (makes dormant rhizome buds respond to chemical control) On monotypic, damaged sites to prepare for crop production 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To prepare a seedbed To reduce RCG seed bank 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Where microtopography must be maintained. Where RCG is mixed with desirable natives On wet sites, where soil could become compacted, or equipment can get stuck If offsite impacts are possible (sedimentation/erosion) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> For most effective control, combine with another treatment Depth should be 4-6" to target RCG rhizomes Till in spring or early summer Repeated tillage can be effective if conducted every four weeks.
 Altering hydrology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prolongs/increases water levels Prevents RCG seed germination Kills RCG rhizomes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> If new water depth is > 12" If high water can be maintained through the growing season. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To promote the growth of emergent plants such as native cattail, burr-reed and bulrush species 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> If new water depth is < 12" or site seasonally dries out If other invasives are nearby (<i>Typha x glauca</i>, <i>Phragmites</i>) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> High water can promote growth of other invasives (<i>Typha x glauca</i>, <i>Phragmites</i>) if present in the area May require special permits
 Mulching / solarization with plastic or fabric	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Non-selective treatment; shades out all plants Kills adult plants Kills RCG rhizomes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> For small, isolated RCG clones For 1-3 consecutive years On patches with high edge:area ratio, to facilitate recolonization by soil fauna 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To facilitate seeding or planting of natives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Where desirable natives are mixed with RCG For abatement on large sites If native species are present In areas with microtopography 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Resurgence from seedbank may occur when tarping removed May have adverse effects on soil microorganisms May alter soil chemistry Not always an effective treatment

A reference table for landowners and restoration professionals

Reed Canarygrass Control Practices: Effects and Management Recommendations

A few things to remember...

Although the recommended reed canarygrass control practices are based on advice from experienced practitioners and researchers, they have not been fully tested in the field.

Following recommendations from this table does not guarantee control and/or eradication of reed canarygrass. Site-specific conditions and timing variables are likely to influence results.

When applying chemical herbicides, follow all safety precautions and label recommendations. Over-application or unintended use of pesticides may harm the environment and pose a safety risk.

Suppression of canarygrass may result in other invasive or undesirable species attempting to colonize the site. Follow-up monitoring or control of other invasives may be needed.

When tractors, mowers, or bulldozers are used in reed canarygrass control, be aware of the potential to pass on seeds, rhizomes or other plant parts to new locations unless equipment is cleaned after use.

Federal, state and local permits may be required when performing restoration work in wetlands or along waterways. Contact your local DNR office or county zoning administrator before initiating reed canarygrass control work.

Contributors: Craig Annen, Tom Bernthal, Thomas Boos, Mike Casler, Judy Derricks, Jerry Doll, Patricia Haack, Mike Healy, Rich Henderson, John Jackson, Bob Jacobson, Kelly Kearns, Greg Kidd, Art Kitchen, Rhonda Krueger, Matt Otto, Mark Renz, Pat Trochlell, Robert Weihrouch, Julia Wilcox and Joy Zedler

This publication is part of an ongoing effort to synthesize and develop effective means of controlling invasive reed canary grass in natural areas. For more information, contact: Art Kitchen

Wisconsin Private Lands Office
4511 Helgesen Drive
Madison, WI 53718
(608) 221-1206 x 13 (office)
e-mail: art_kitchen@fws.gov

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