

Cattails

Typhaceae

Typha spp

Cattails are found in wetlands including lakeshores, ditches, fresh or brackish marshes, lakes, ponds, and other shallow water sites. The most common species in Colorado are narrowleaf, broadleaf, and southern cattail.

- Origin:** Most species are native to North America. Some populations are hybrids
- Description:** 3 to 10 feet tall grass-like leaves with a cigar-shaped brown spike inflorescence
- Color:** Green to bluish-green or grayish green
- Roots:** Tough, creeping, branched white rhizomes (underground stems) with shallow fibrous roots forming dense colonies
- Stems:** Erect and unbranched. Rigid and solid without nodes
- Leaves:** Green to bluish- or grayish-green, linear, flat, thick and spongy
- Flowers:** Green flower spikes appear in late spring to early summer and change to familiar brown seedheads from July to August.
- Seeds:** Up to 250,000 soft, downy seeds can be produced in the late summer through fall
- Viability:** Although seeds have survived a century in soil, they are usually only viable for several years
- Toxicity:** Common cattails may cause mild digestive upset in horses if consumed in large quantities but are usually not palatable
- Lookalikes:** Yellow flag iris (*Iris pseudacorus*)
Phragmites (*Phragmites spp*)



Cattails are a native plant in freshwater communities that provide valuable habitat for gamebirds, waterfowl, and songbirds. They can be found in sunny, wet areas with nutrient rich, acidic or alkaline, and slightly saline conditions.

Cattails reproduce by both seed and creeping rhizomes. Seeds are wind- and water-dispersed and may remain viable for several years. Rhizome fragments can also move with water or soil disturbance and establish new plants.

They can behave like an aggressive weed by forming solid stands that limit biodiversity, impede water movement, and eliminate open water.

On the backside of this sheet are cattail management recommendations.

If you have any questions, please contact the Weld County Public Works Dept., Weed Division at (970) 400-3770 or visit <https://www.weldweeds.org>



Recommended range and pasture management methods:

Cultural

Prevent cattail monocultures by reducing excess sediment and nutrient buildup where possible. Maintaining healthy wetland plant diversity can help limit cattail expansion. Where water levels can be managed, deeper water may suppress seedlings and weaken established plants over time. Fire may be used in some situations to remove dead litter, but burning alone does not usually provide long-term control.

Mechanical

Cutting cattails below the waterline two to three times before flowering can reduce growth and may provide good control over time. Cutting is most effective when cut stems remain submerged. Hand removal may work for small patches, but rhizomes and fragments should be removed where practical to reduce regrowth and spread.

Biological

There is no biological control currently.

Herbicides

Cattails are found in riparian areas. Great care should be used when using herbicides so as not to harm other water plants.

Rodeo, Arsenal or Habitat are effective but use with caution. These products are non-selective herbicides and will kill all other vegetation that is sprayed. Not all chemicals are eligible for cost-share funding.

<u>Herbicide</u>	<u>Rate</u>	<u>Application Timing</u>	<u>Comments</u>
Renovate 3 OR Garlon 3A (Triclopyr)	16 to 64 oz/acre	Post-emergence from boot to flowering.	Can be used in wetlands. Avoid spraying into open water. No restrictions on water usage for swimming, fishing and livestock. Use an aquatic labeled non-ionic surfactant at 32 oz/100 gal.
Glyphosate 41% Non-selective	2 to 5% or 96 to 160 oz/acre	When most plants have reached the early head stage.	No restrictions on water usage for irrigation, recreation, or domestic purposes. Do not spray directly into open water.
Clearcast (Imazamox)	64 to 128 oz/acre	From new growth through killing frost.	No restrictions on water usage for swimming, fishing, domestic use, ag sprays or livestock. Add an aquatic labeled MSO at 32 oz/100 gal water.
Arsenal or Habitat (Imazapyr) Caution: Typically, a bare-ground product	32 to 64 oz/acre	Apply to actively growing green foliage after full elongation. <i>Lower rate will control cattail in the north</i>	No restrictions on water usage for swimming, fishing and livestock. Minimize amount of over spray that enters the water. Use an aquatic labeled non-ionic or MSO surfactant at 32 oz/100 gal.

ALWAYS READ, UNDERSTAND, AND FOLLOW HERBICIDE LABEL DIRECTIONS

The herbicide label is the LAW