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# Invasive Cordgrasses - Spartina Species - Estuarine Invaders!

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# Think you've seen *Spartina* in Oregon?

- *Spartina* species are invaders in the Pacific Northwest, but there are many native grasses and grass-like plants in estuaries which can make identification difficult.
- Safety permitting, try to get a fresh sample of an entire stem. Look carefully at the ligule (where the leaf blade joins the stem).
- **If the ligule appears hairy, please call 1-866-INVADER.**
- Be sure to note the location using either local landmarks or GPS coordinates. This information is essential to investigate suspicious sites.

# Don't let invasive cordgrasses get a foothold in Oregon!

**Report suspect  
sites to**

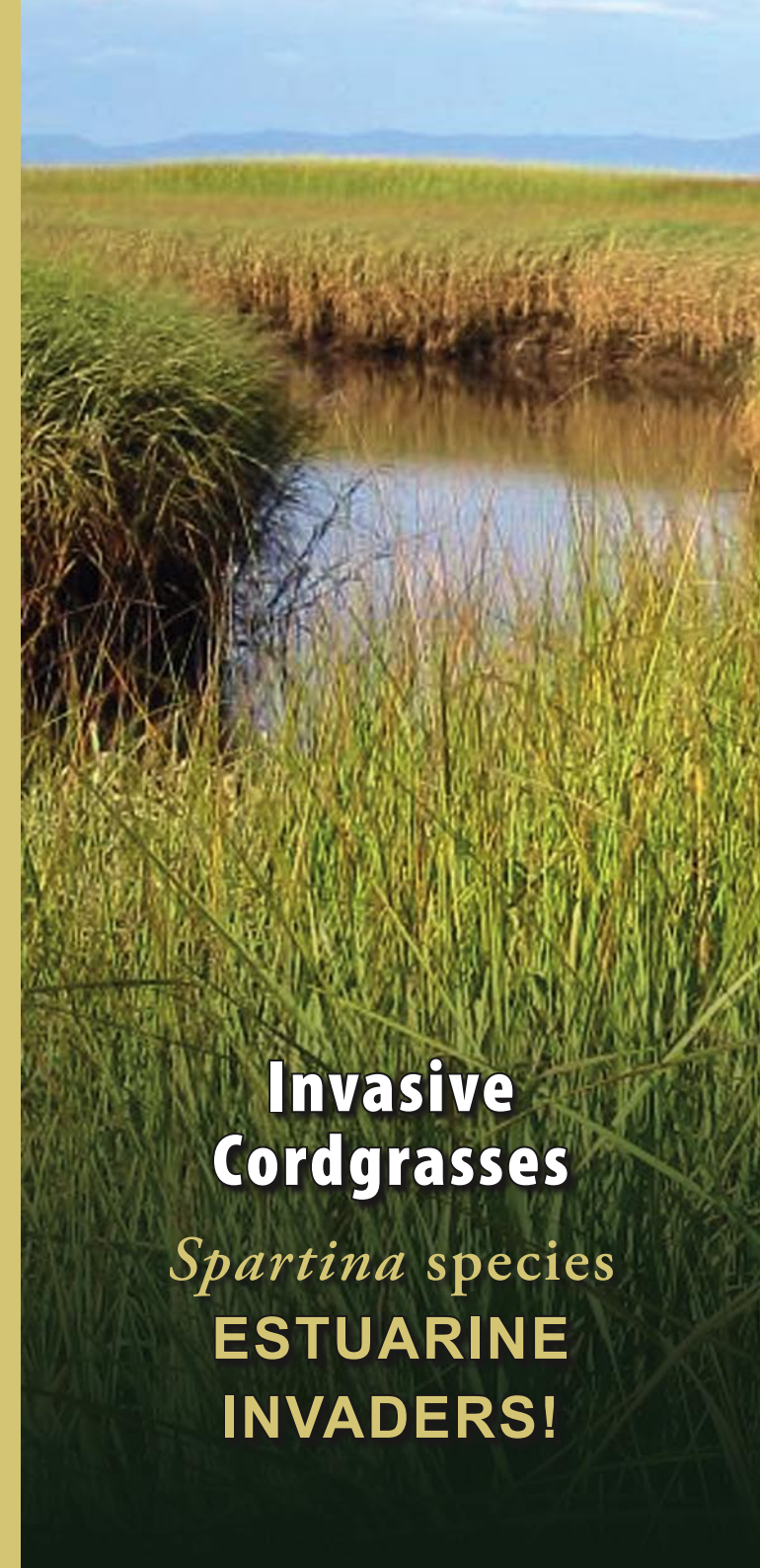
Oregon Department of Agriculture  
Noxious Weed Control Program  
503-986-4621  
or call

**1-866-INVADER**

For more information, visit:  
<http://oregon.gov/ODA/PLANT/WEEDS>  
or  
[http://clr.pdx.edu/projects/ans\\_research/spartina](http://clr.pdx.edu/projects/ans_research/spartina)



Oregon Department  
of Agriculture  
Plant Division  
Noxious Weed Control Program  
695 Capitol St. NE  
Salem OR 97301-2532



**Invasive  
Cordgrasses**

*Spartina* species  
**ESTUARINE  
INVADERS!**



## What is invasive *Spartina*?

Commonly known as cordgrasses, *Spartina* species are noxious weeds in the Pacific Northwest. Four species of these grasses can grow in mudflats and salt marshes of estuaries. They were originally introduced either to solidify wetlands or accidentally with packing material for east coast oysters.



## Impacts of invasive *Spartina*

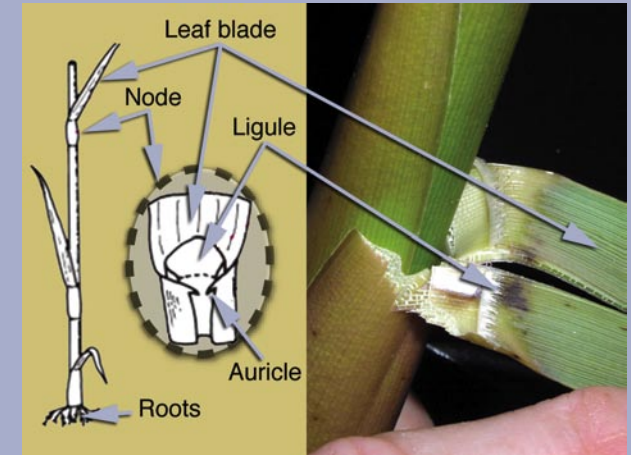
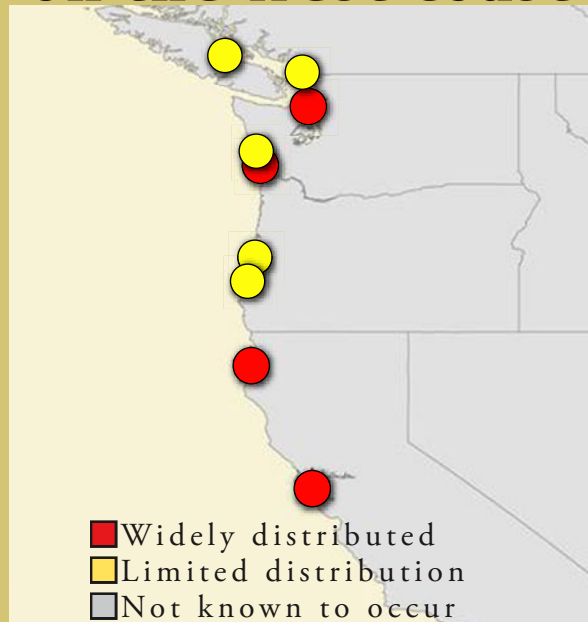
*Spartina* threatens the diversity and health of our estuaries in a variety of ways. By growing in dense patches, clones can reduce feeding areas for shorebirds, crabs and other animals. Closely placed stems trap sediment—raising the elevation of the marsh and altering the hydrology in ways that could lead to flooding upstream.



## How does *Spartina* spread?

Ocean currents can carry rhizome fragments or wrack (floating mats of senescent *Spartina* stems and inflorescences) long distances. Seeds can also hitchhike with migrating birds, motorboats, kayaks or other gear. The seeds can survive up to one year in wet, salty conditions.

## Distribution on the West Coast



## How can you identify invasive *Spartina*?

*Spartina* species are perennial grasses that range from two to eight feet tall. They grow in intertidal estuarine habitats (not in freshwater) and are typically found in large circular patches. The stems are round in cross-section and hollow between each node. Leaf blades are sharply pointed at the tips and do not have a midrib. The ligule, found where the leaf blade joins the stem, consists only of a fringe of hairs (see picture above). Flower spikes occur in late summer to fall.

Three of the four invasive *Spartina* species are deciduous, meaning their stems die back to the ground at the end of the growing season; the fourth stays green year-round and grows in dense tufts.

Photographs: C. Cornu, J. Rybczyk, San Francisco Invasive *Spartina* Project & V. Howard.  
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For more information, contact 503-986-4621  
<http://oregon.gov/ODA/PLANT>

