

# “B” Rated Weeds

A weed of economic importance which is regionally abundant,  
but may have limited distribution in some counties

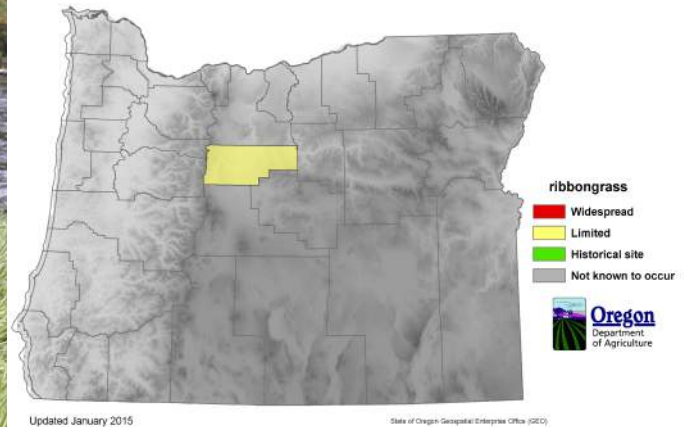
## Ribbongrass

*Phalaris arundinaceae*

Other common names: Ornamental reed  
canarygrass, Gardens garters

USDA symbol: PHAR

ODA rating: B and T



**Introduction:** Ribbongrass, the ornamental name for a variegated canarygrass is an old garden favorite and is often found in older gardens and abandoned farm sites. It makes an effective groundcover and bankcover. It grows well next to water and thrives in shallow water where it can be highly competitive.

**Distribution:** Generally found in western parts of PNW states though now weedy in Jefferson County in central Oregon.

**Description:** It is a small- to medium-sized perennial ornamental grass or tall non-traditional groundcover, growing to 1' tall in full sun, 1.5' tall in partial sun, and up to 3' tall in partial shade, spreading continuously at its perimeter to form a dense groundcover -procumbent mat. Clumps have slow to medium growth rates at their perimeter. The best growth performance occurs in moist, well-drained soils in partial sun, but it is very tolerant of poor soils, sandy soils, dry soils and well-drained saturated soils. It has virtually no disease or pest problems.

Leaves are  $\frac{3}{4}$  to 1 inch wide and 5 to 7 inches long. Lanceolate to narrow ovate leaves emerge briefly with pink and white variegation, but quickly change to longitudinal stripes (or ribbons) of green and white variegation as they expand (hence the common names of Garden's Garters, resembling striped garters or suspenders). Flowers are rare or sparse, white to pink and display in June and July, on a 2' stalk. Plants bleach to beige with the first frosts. Foliage remains attractive in winter.

**Impacts:** Can outcompete native vegetation in riparian zones but measurable impacts have not been compiled where populations have escaped. Impacts on invertebrate or vertebrate populations have not been evaluated though it has been shown that *Phalaris* infestations do not support a healthy diversity of invertebrate species.

**Biological controls:** None have been identified.

