Giant cane
(Arundo donax)

Originated in Asia. Introduced probably during the Roman period. Grown for numerous uses, notably for musical instruments (clarinets, saxophones, oboes, etc.), reed pens, reed fencing, baskets, landscaping (windbreaks), bio-energy.

Description
- A perennial, ligneous cane (grass), producing rhizomes, can reach a height of 5 to 6 metres and has a life span of over 10 years
- Erect plant with many leaves, growing in dense stands
- Hollow, woody stalk, 2-3 cm in diameter, regular distances between leaf nodes, appearance similar to bamboo
- Fibrous taproots, rhizomes near the soil surface
- Alternating leaves, parallel but on opposite sides, deciduous but long lasting, blue-green in colour, ribbon-like and flat with rough edges 2-8 cm in width, very short ligules with long hairs
- Flowers arranged in erect panicles, oblong-thyrse shaped, pinkish-white in colour, on the upper section of the stalk, 30 to 70 cm long
- Fruit arranged in ears of two to five flowers, often three, approximately 12 mm long

Ecology and reproduction
- The plant flowers from September to October
- For optimal growth, the plant requires direct light and high temperatures
- Preferred habitats include wetlands, reed beds, riparian zones, ditches, roadsides, idle land, sandy soil along coasts. This very rustic plant can grow in poor soil and disturbed areas
- Exclusively asexual multiplication via the stalk and the rhizomes. High percentage of new sprouts from cuttings and rhizome fragments

Documentation

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