

# Invasive Plants in Pennsylvania

## Hybrid Cattail

*Typha x glauca*



Huron River Watershed Council

<http://www.flickr.com/photos/bioreserve>

### Background:

It is believed that this is a cross between the European introduced narrow-leaved cattail (*Typhus angustifolia*) and the native common cattail (*Typha latifolia*). Pollen samples suggest that hybrid cattail was present in New York marshes dating as far back as 800 AD.

### Range:

Originally native to Europe, this species can now be found in almost every U.S. state. Data suggests that it is widespread across PA, though in a minority of the counties.



PLANTS  
Pennsylvania  
TYGL



**pennsylvania**  
DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION  
AND NATURAL RESOURCES

[www.dcnr.state.pa.us](http://www.dcnr.state.pa.us)

### Description:

This hybrid cattail typically grows five to ten feet tall, with long, stiff leaves 0.3" to 0.8" inches in width. There are approximately 15 leaves per shoot. Flowers form a dense cylindrical "spike" at the top of the plant and typically the male flowers are yellow in the upper section with a lower, separated, brown female, sausage-shaped flower.



Central Lake Ontario Conservation

<http://www.cloca.com/index.php>

### Habitat:

This species prefers wetland habitats, such as marshes, sedge meadows, and riparian areas. It also inhabits areas periodically flooded, such as roadside ditches, canals, and stormwater retention basins.

### Biology and Spread:

Seeds are small, dry and wind dispersed. One plant can produce between 20,000–700,000 fruits per year. In addition, this species is rhizomatous, forming clones that can spread laterally up to 8 meters per year.

### Ecological Threat:

This species quickly spreads in open, wet mineral soils and can quickly out-compete native plants in aquatic, wetland habitats, creating mono-specific invasive cattail stands.



Robert W. Freckmann

<http://wisplants.uwsp.edu>

## How to Control this Species:

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Depending on the characteristics of each site, a variety of control measures can be used to limit the spread of hybrid cattails. Often if water levels can be manipulated in conjunction with cutting or mechanical removal, hybrid cattail can be controlled.

Treatment with chemical control agents is possible; however extreme care must be taken in applying herbicides to wetland habitats. Be sure to use herbicides that readily break down in water and are not harmful to other aquatic plants or animals.

## Look-A-Likes:

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This species looks very similar to the native common cattail (*Typha latifolia*), but the common cattail has wider leaves (1/2 to 1 inch wide) and no gap exists on the stem between male and female flowers. It also closely resembles the narrow-leaved cattail (*scientific name*), it's other parent species. Narrow-leaved cattail is typically shorter at three to five feet in height, with long, stiff leaves (1/4 to 1/2 inch in width).

Fire has been used to control hybrid cattail, but rhizomes must be burned or re-sprouting following fire will occur.

More information can be found at:

Exotic Plant Pest Tutorial:  
[http://www.dcnr.state.pa.us/forestry/invasivetutorial/cattail\\_M\\_C.htm](http://www.dcnr.state.pa.us/forestry/invasivetutorial/cattail_M_C.htm)

USDA Forest Service Fire Effects Information System:  
<http://www.fs.fed.us/database/feis/plants/graminoid/typang/all.html>

## References:

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Invasive Species Compendium:

<http://www.cabi.org/isc/default.aspx?site=144&page=4066>

USDA PLANTS Database:

<http://plants.usda.gov/java/profile?symbol=TYAN>

Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources:

[http://dnr.wi.gov/invasives/fact/narrow\\_cattail.htm](http://dnr.wi.gov/invasives/fact/narrow_cattail.htm)

Rhoads, A.F. & Block, T.A. 2007. *The Plants of Pennsylvania: An Illustrated Manual*. 2nd ed. University of Pennsylvania Press: Philadelphia, PA.

## For More Information:

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To learn more about invasive species in Pennsylvania, check out the following site:

DCNR Invasive Species Site: <http://www.dcnr.state.pa.us/conservationscience/invasivespecies/index.htm>

## Native Alternatives:

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The best native alternative for hybrid cattail is the native common cattail (*Typha latifolia*).



Graves Lovell  
[www.forestryimages.com](http://www.forestryimages.com)