



WEEDS

AFRICAN FEATHER GRASS

Glossary

Inflorescence

The arrangement of the flowers and flower axes.

Opportunistic

All year round.

Perennial

With a life span extending over more than two growing seasons.

Rhizomes

A creeping stem, usually below ground from which new aerial shoots arise.

Spikelets

Unbranched inflorescence of sessile (stalkless) flowers.

Tussocky

Dense or large tufts.

For More Information

Contact

Eastern Hills Catchment Management Program
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Shire of Kalamunda Bushcare Co-ordinator
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Pennisetum Macroucrum



Introduction

The species became popular as an ornamental grass in suburban gardens and has since become a prevalent weed along roadside verges and other areas of disturbed land, such as wetlands.

Origin

Southern Africa.

Status

Declared plant in the Shire of Kalamunda's Pest Plant By-Law, 1979.

Lifeform

Perennial grass.

Description

Large, tussocky grass: up to two metres tall.

Leaves: Blades; up to 60 cm long.

Flowers/Seed heads: Large; pale green/cream/pale brown/purple; cylindrical; dense; spike-like inflorescence; up to 30 cm long.

Reproduction & Dispersal

Spreads mainly by rhizomes. Spikelets fall with attached bristle that readily clings to clothes and wool and can be spread by is by water and airborne means.

Distribution

Perth - Albany. It is common at Lesmurdie Falls.

Growing Season

Spring - Summer.

Flowering Season

Summer.

Effect on Ecosystem

Although a particularly invasive species, it will generally not be prevalent in undisturbed bushland.

Once a disturbance occurs the species become an opportunistic invader of that area.

It is drought resistant, commonly supports rabbit populations, is a fire hazard and restricts access to water courses.

Control

Manual Removal

Avoid dumping garden refuse containing these grasses in areas where they may establish. Hand dig out small infestations, manual control is very difficult for larger infestations.

Mowing and cultivation are usually ineffective. Selective control can usually be achieved by spraying.

Chemical Treatment

Slash and spray larger infestations with glyphosate + penetrant during Spring - Autumn. Follow up seedling control treatment until regrowth ceases.

Please see 'Herbicides and Pesticides' factsheet for more information about spraying chemicals.

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