



Weed Management Information

Chilean needle grass

Botanical name: *Nassella neesiana*

Weed Class: Class 4 noxious weed

Legal requirements: The growth of the plant must be managed in a manner that reduces its numbers, spread and incidence and continuously inhibits its reproduction and the plant must not be sold, propagated or knowingly distributed.

Control options

Chilean needle grass grows in temperate regions with annual rainfall greater than 500mm. It can thrive in a wide range of soils and conditions and has the potential to be very invasive in both pasture and native vegetation over a large part of the country. It tolerates drought and heavy grazing.

Manual control: Seedlings and individual plants can often be pulled up by hand. Manual hoeing or slashing should occur before flowering and seeding. Plants with seedheads should be collected and burnt.

Biological control: There are currently no biological controls for Chilean needle grass.

Chemical control: Use a herbicide that is registered for use on Chilean needle grass in NSW and in a manner and rate stated on the label (or a current pesticide order). Seek advice from a Council Vegetation Officer or your herbicide supplier. Please ensure the chosen product is suitable for the designated land use and situation. Please observe all environmental and safety cautions that are stated on the label.

Pasture rehabilitation: Following herbicide controls and a fallow period, good results can be obtained by growing fodder crops over two or more seasons, spraying out any emerging Chilean needle grass prior to re-sowing and following with establishing pastures using appropriate pasture species. Seek your local agronomist's advice on the best cropping and pasture species to use.

Grazing: Good grazing management is essential in maintaining ground cover to minimise likelihood of Chilean needle grass establishing. However, grazing does not prevent stem seeding and is not recommended for control of already established infestations.

Slashing: Slashing is not recommended as Chilean needle grass produces stem seeds which are close to the ground and therefore unlikely to be removed by this method.

Description

Chilean needle grass, named for its sharp, pointed seeds, is a perennial tussock forming grass growing in dense clumps to 1 m high. Distinguished by nodes covered with short soft hairs; purplish glumes to 25 mm long; cylindrical crown (corona) around the base of the awn is less than 1.5 mm long and lacks long hairs

Leaves: Leaves to 5 mm wide with ligules to 3 mm long

Flowers: Seed head grows to 40 cm long; lemma (excluding corona) to 1 cm long, hard point at base of lemma with hairs; awns twice bent, 4–9 cm long. Flowers spring and summer

Dispersal: Spread by seeds that are produced in the seed heads as well as beneath leaf-sheaths above the nodes of flowering shoots and at the stem base. Stem seeds enable the plant to reproduce even if flowering is prevented.



Chilean needle grass

Photo: DPI Bega Valley Shire Council



Chilean needle grass seed heads

Photo: DPI Bega Valley Shire Council

For further information: Councils Vegetation Officers Ph: (02) 6499 2222

Helpful websites www.southeastweeds.org.au
www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/agriculture/pests-weeds/weeds

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