

Weed Sheet

Declared weed sheet : Coolatai Grass



Government of South Australia
South Australian Murray-Darling Basin
Natural Resources Management Board

Coolatai Grass

(Hyparrhenia hirta)

Coolatai grass is a perennial tussock forming grass which invades pastures and native vegetation.



Coolatai Grass



What is it?

Coolatai grass is a dense tussock forming grass which can grow up to 2m. Originally it was introduced into Australia for soil stabilisation and as a pasture. It can quickly out-compete other ground covers and grasses forming a dense monoculture. The abundance of dry stalks and leaf matter are a fire hazard particularly on roadsides and in urban areas.

What does it look like?

Growth: Perennial tussock grass up to 2m tall, its main growing period is late spring and summer. Coolatai grass can be confused with similar looking native grasses, e.g. Lemon scented grasses (*Cymbopogon* species), Kangaroo grass (*Themeda triandra*) and Red-leg grass (*Bothriochloa macra*).

Leaves: Leaves are thin grey-green straps with a prominent midrib up to 30cm long and 0.5cm wide. Each leaf stem junction has a membranous ligule 2-4mm long.

Flowers: A pair of grey-white flower racemes (spikes) up to 5cm long forms a 'V' at the end of the flowering stalks. Each raceme has 5-7 paired spikelets with a single brown awn on each pair. Coolatai grass flowers in late spring and summer.

Seeds: Each Coolatai grass plant can produce thousands of tiny sticky seeds to 2mm long which are contained within an awned hairy husk.

Why is it a problem?

Coolatai grass is capable of invading native vegetation thus preventing regeneration of native grasses and ground covers. Coolatai grass has low digestibility, and is not preferred by livestock. Preferential pasture species are consumed allowing Coolatai grass to expand its area. Dense stands of Coolatai grass also pose a fire risk especially in urban areas.

Affected land uses : Grazing, Native Vegetation and Urban land use are impacted by the presence of Coolatai grass.

Where is it found?

Currently infestations of Coolatai grass can be found in NSW, QLD, Vic, WA and SA in areas where the average annual rainfall is between 400 - 800mm. It can grow on many different soil types and under varied climatic conditions. In South Australia most infestations are centred around the Adelaide Hills and Fleurieu Peninsula region, while isolated infestations occur in the Riverland and Upper South East.

How is it spread?

Coolatai grass produces thousands of tiny seeds with hairy awned husks which adhere to clothing, animals, machinery and vehicles. Seeds may also be transported via water along drainage lines.

How do we control it?

Prevention:

Once established, Coolatai grass is difficult to control. Avoid travelling through Coolatai grass infestations especially when plants are seeding. Ensure machinery, vehicles and clothing are cleaned down after working in a known Coolatai grass area.

Physical control:

Is its essential that Coolatai grass not be allowed to set seed, mowing, slashing and strategic grazing can reduce or prevent seed set. Small infestations should be grubbed out and material appropriately disposed.

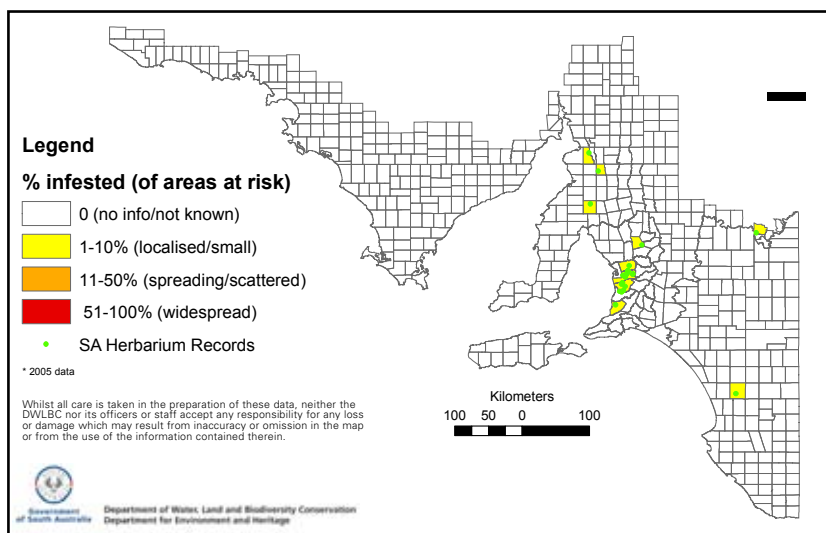
Chemical control:

Glyphosate and Flupropanate may be applied to actively growing plants to aid control of Coolatai grass. Infestations may need to be slashed, mowed or burnt to remove old growth material and stimulate new active growth. Several applications may be required to achieve control of Coolatai grass.

Biological control:

There are currently no known biological control agents being investigated to assist in the control of Coolatai grass.

For more advice on recognising and controlling Coolatai grass, contact your local Natural Resources Management Board Officer.



Infestation Level of COOLATAI GRASS (*Hyparrhenia hirta*) by hundreds in the State of South Australia*

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
X	X							X	X	X	X

X denotes peak growth period

Yearly Weed Life Cycle of COOLATAI GRASS (*Hyparrhenia hirta*) in the State of South Australia

Germination	Active growth
Flowering	Seed set

References:

Adelaide and Mount Lofty Ranges Natural Resources Management Board (2007) Weed identification Notes – Coolatai grass. Available online, www.amlnrm.sa.gov.au

North West Weeds – Coolatai grass. Available online, www.northwestweeds.nsw.gov.au/coolatai_grass.htm

Weeds Australia – Coolatai grass (online) www.weeds.org.au

Weed Management CRC (2007), Weed Management Guide – Coolatai grass (*Hyparrhenia hirta*). Available online, www.weeds.crc.org.au/documents/wmg_coolatai.pdf



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Legislation

Coolatai grass is declared under the Natural Resource Management (NRM) Act 2004.

Declared Plant Class: 2i
Declared Plant Category: 2

The following provisions of the NRM Act 2004 are to be applied to the whole of the State:
175(2) - relates to the movement of plants on public roads within a control area.
177(1)(2) - relates to the sale of plants, produce or goods carrying plants.

The following provisions of the NRM Act 2004 are to be applied to certain Council areas outlined in the "South Australian Government Gazette";

182(2)(3) - relates to the obligation of an owner of land to control and keep controlled the plant and take any measures prescribed by the relevant authority.

185(1) - relates to the ability of the NRM authority to recover the costs of control on roadsides from adjoining landholders.

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