

Palm grass

Setaria palmifolia

Family

Poaceae (grass)

Also known as

Pleated pigeon grass

Where is it originally from?

India

What does it look like?

Dense, palm-like grass with a dense root mass and tough rhizomes with rounded stems. Harsh, hanging palm-like leaves (30-100 x 5-8 cm) are pleated and taper to a point. Narrow, seedheads (20-30 cm) with fuzzy, foxtail-like tips on long arching stems (Dec-Mar).

Are there any similar species?

This is the only grass with palm-like leaves.

Why is it weedy?

Tough rhizomes, long-lived and forms pure stands. Tolerates full sun to moderate shade, heavy to light soils, damage, hot to moderately cool temperatures, wind, salt, occasionally submersion, wet or dry spots, and is drought-tolerant when established. It is occasionally an annual in cold areas, where it is checked by heavy frost, but mature plants are cold resistant.

How does it spread?

Rhizomes and seed, occasionally aided by water movement. Slower spread occurs from gardens and through dumped garden waste.

What damage does it do?

Forms a total groundcover, preventing the growth and establishment of seedlings of all other species.

Which habitats is it likely to invade?

Disturbed and open forest, shrubland, herbfield, bare land, semi-epiphyte niches and tree roots, mainly in low-frost areas.

What can I do to get rid of it?

1. Dig out small patches (all year round). Dispose of at refuse transfer station or burn.
2. Spray (active growth stage): glyphosate (20ml/L + penetrant).
3. Stem injection (active growth stage): 2ml glyphosate (undiluted) into root masses, 150 mm apart.

What can I do to stop it coming back?

Rhizomes and root masses resprout constantly and seed banks occasionally reinfest bared areas. Frequent and regular follow up required until eradication.



www.weedbusters.org.nz



Photo: Carolyn Lewis



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