# African lovegrass

*Eragrostis curvula*

www.weedbusters.org.nz

**Family**
Poaceae (grass)

**Also known as**
Weeping lovegrass, Boer lovegrass, fyngrass, *Poa curvula*

**Where is it originally from?**
Africa

**What does it look like?**
Variable, densely tufted, tussock-like, erect or prostrate perennial grass (<1.5 m tall) with fibrous roots (<50 cm deep) that is deciduous in cold areas. Narrow, rough, bright green to blue-green (blushes bronze-red after hard frost) hair-like leaves (3-7mm wide) are rolled inwards, and usually curly at tips. Seedheads with blackish, olive purplish seeds, ripening to greyish in summer, are usually loose, airy hanging clusters (<30 cm x <20 cm), on arching stems (<1 m long). Several varieties occur in New Zealand, and harshness and palatability to animals varies widely.

Photo: Trevor James

**Are there any similar species?**
This is the only grass with blackish seeds and curly leaf tips.

**Why is it weedy?**
Long-lived, fast growing and maturing. Produces massive numbers of highly viable, well-dispersed seeds that germinate spring and autumn. Tolerates fire, disturbance, hot temperatures to hard frost, poor and acidic soils, and while intolerant of wet soil, grows rapidly through droughts.

**How does it spread?**
Seeds are spread in wind, and on vehicles, stock and people. Reseeds prolifically after fire, spraying or mechanical disturbance.

Photo: Trevor James

**What damage does it do?**
Rapidly invades bare and disturbed sites and forms dense stands that prevent the establishment of native species.

**Which habitats is it likely to invade?**
Steep, dry sites, short and tall tussockland, coastal areas, riverbeds, offshore and inshore islands, cliffs, and herbfields, potentially throughout New Zealand.

**What can I do to get rid of it?**
Contact your regional council to determine the status of this species and responsibility for control.
1. Physical removal - dig out isolated plants (all year round). Grubbing is a good option for fibrous deep rooted sedges. If grubbing you'll need to ensure all the root crown is removed. Dispose of at refuse transfer station or burn.
2. Foliar spray (spring-autumn) - Apply Glyphosate (360 g/L active ingredient) herbicide at 15ml/L to cover entire plant. Note: Glyphosate overspray will kill other (desirable) dune grasses OR Apply 520g/L haloxyfop-P-methyl (3ml/L) +label recommended adjuvant . Haloxyfop is selective for grasses and will not harm broadleaf species but can have residual activity in the soil. Do not use if you intend to replant with grasses. Not for use over water bodies or wetlands
CAUTION: When using any herbicide or pesticide, PLEASE READ THE LABEL THOROUGHLY to ensure that all instructions and directions for the purchase, use and storage of the product, are followed and adhered to.

**What can I do to stop it coming back?**
Difficult to control, repeat treatments every 3 months needed. Minimise disturbance, exclude stock. Densely plant with shade-forming species where appropriate.

Photo: Trevor James