# Palm grass

*Setaria palmifolia*

www.weedbusters.org.nz

**Family**
Poaceae (grass)

**Also known as**
Pleated pigeon grass

**Where is it originally from?**
India

Photo: Trevor James

**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.

Photo: Carolyn Lewis

**How does it spread?**
Rhizomes and seed, occasionally aided by water movement. Slower spead 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.

Photo: Carolyn Lewis

**What can I do to get rid of it?**
1. Physical removal - Dig out all parts of plant (all year round). Dispose of at refuse transfer station or burn.
2. Cut and paste (all year round) - Cut the stem/trunk as close to the ground as possible and cover the entire stump with herbicide as soon as possible after cutting. Apply glyphosate gel (240g/L strength)
3. Overall 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) plants. Not for use near water bodies or wetlands - check with your regional council. Use only as directed on label.
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?**
Rhizomes and root masses resprout constantly and seed banks occasionally reinfest bared areas. Frequent and regular follow up required until eradication.