

Buffalo grass

Stenotaphrum secundatum

Family

Gramineae (grass)

Where is it originally from?

Tropical America and Africa

What does it look like?

Dense, mat-forming, coarse perennial grass with long, stout, usually reddish stolons, and occasionally with thin rhizomes. Flattened, strap-like dull greyish to bluish green leaves (40-100 x 4-12 mm) are alternate with a hooded tip that splits when flattened, blades folded at base, with a tiny fringe of hairs where the leaf joins the stem, and auricles (extensions at the base of the leaf blade clasping the stem) are missing. Finely striped green and white sheath is large, broad, usually has a reddish tinge and hairs (3-4 mm) at the blade junction. Seedhead is a rigid, flattened, brittle spike, seeds are usually aligned to one side.

Are there any similar species?

Axonopus affinis, *Paspalum distichum*, and *Pennisetum clandestinum* are all similar.

Why is it weedy?

Grows rapidly, forming dense mats, and fragments are effectively dispersed. Tolerates damp to drought conditions, hot to moderate cool, salt, wind, damage and grazing, and most soils, but is intolerant of heavy frost and moderate shade.

How does it spread?

Stolon fragments and occasionally seed are moved by livestock (seeds in dung), contaminated machinery and boots, dumped vegetation, soil movement, and road graders. Also spreads from coastal lawns where it is sometimes planted.

What damage does it do?

Forms dense, tall, long-lived mats that smother and exclude all other species except kikuyu. It can become the terminal species in weed successional process. It can also help fire spread.

Which habitats is it likely to invade?

Disturbed shrubland, short tussockland, fernland, herbfield, bare land, and coastal fringes, especially in warmer areas.

What can I do to get rid of it?

1. Foliar spray

Apply 520g/L haloxyfop-P-methyl (3ml/L + label recommended penetrant). Haloxyfop is selective for grasses and will not harm broadleaf species, however, in store availability may be limited. OR glyphosate (360g/L active ingredient at 100ml/10L + label recommended penetrant). 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?

Physical removal largely ineffective, creates disposal problem. Maintain rolling control front, check for occasionally seedlings. Planting belts of dense, 1 m+ tall, shady, non-grass species can block spread into at-risk habitats.



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Photo: Trevor James



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