

Surf Coast Shire

Grassy Weeds Information Sheet

Texas Needle-grass

Nassella leucotricha POACEAE

Origin: Southern Nth America

Description:

A perennial tussock-forming grass up to 1-1.5m high.

Flower/Seed head: The seed head is up to 250mm long on erect and unbranched stems which are mostly hairless (1).

Flowers and sets seed during spring and early summer.

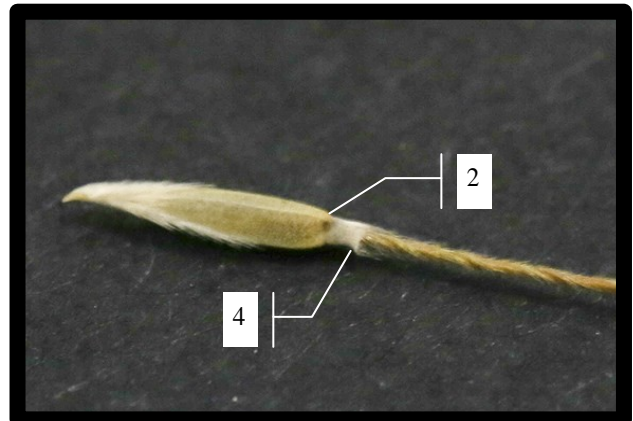
Seed: changes from pale brown to purple at maturity. Between the seed and its tail (awn) there is a characteristic raised ring (corona) with long thin hairs (2). The awn is 35-60mm long, bent twice with 10-20mm to first bend (3). Cleistogenes (hidden stem seeds) may be present.

Similar to Chilean Needle-grass, Texas Needle-grass can be distinguished by the long thin hairs on the corona (4). Chilean has short tooth-like hairs (5).

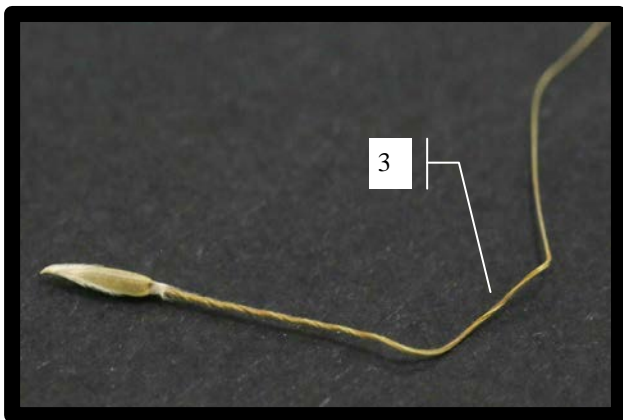
Leaves: The blades are mid to dark green, flat or slightly in-rolled, 5mm wide and 300mm long.



Texas Needle-grass



Texas Needle-grass



Texas Needle-grass



Chilean Needle-grass

Notes:

- Also known as Texas Wintergrass in its native Texas.
- The sharp seeds can cause physical harm to animals and humans.
- Seeds are easily spread by machinery, vehicles, animals, clothing and footwear and also by wind and water.
- Highly invasive and capable of forming dense infestations, affecting pastures, native grasslands and woodlands.
- Similar to Chilean Needle-grass, Texas Needle-grass can be distinguished by the long thin hairs on the corona (Chilean has short tooth-like hairs)

Similar native species: Texas Needle-grass is similar to several native species of Spear grass *Austrostipa* sp. but distinguishable by a distinct collar or ring around the top of the mature seed. The seeds of native Spear grasses do not have the corona.

Status: Environmental weed in Surf Coast Shire.

Weed treatment:





Photo taken by Barrabool Hills Landcare

Chilean Needle-grass

Nassella neesiana POACEAE

Origin: South America

Description:

A tussock-forming perennial grass, up to 1.2m high. Flower/Seed head: Loose, open, drooping panicle at the end of the flowering stems. The bracts holding the flowers are purple, giving the whole plant a distinctive purplish colour. Flowers and sets seed during spring and early summer. Seeds: pale brown and sharply pointed. Between the seed and its tail (awn) there is a characteristic raised ring (corona) 1-1.5mm long with small teeth encircling the awn. Cleistogenes (hidden seeds) are also produced at the stem nodes (elbows) and base of the plant beneath the leaf sheath.

Leaves: Narrow, coarse leaves 5mm wide and 300mm long, with distinct ribs running from base to tip and slightly serrated edges. At the base of each leaf is a 3mm long smooth membranous ligule with two small tufts of erect hairs.

Notes:

- As a vigorous competitor, it is a major threat to both conservation and agricultural lands.
- Capable of producing up to 22,000 seeds per square metre with a long-lived seed bank.
- The "needle-sharp" seeds can cause physical harm to both animals and humans.
- Seeds with their long corkscrew-like awns and sharp tip are easily spread by wind, machinery, vehicles, animals, clothing and footwear.
- The stem seeds enable the plant to reproduce even if flowering is prevented by slashing or grazing.

Similar native species: Similar to several native Australian Spear grasses *Austrostipa* sp. The seeds of native *Austrostipa* sp. appear similar except that they don't have the corona.

Status: Weed of National Significance, Restricted Weed.

Weedy facts: Thought to have entered Australia from South America as a contaminant of wool or fodder. Trials have shown that Chilean Needle-grass can out-compete Serrated Tussock.

Weed treatment:



Serrated Tussock

Nassella trichotoma POACEAE

Origin: South America

Description:

A fine-leaved perennial tussock-forming grass to about 600mm high.

Flower/Seed head: The multi-branched seed head is up to 350mm long and at each junction there are two or three branches with a single seed on each branch. It has a weeping

appearance when in full flower and changes in colour as it matures from purple through to gold. Spring flowering. Seed: Hard and small with a ring of white hairs at one end and a twisted tail (awn) 25mm long at the other end. The awn is attached off-centre to the seed.

Leaves: Blades are thin, up to 500mm in length, and tightly rolled with small serrations which can be felt when running the leaf between the fingers from the tip to the base.

Notes:

- A major agricultural weed in the region that has also invaded native grasslands, pastures, grassy woodlands, roadsides and riparian areas.
- Large, vigorous plants can produce 100,000 seeds annually. Seed remains viable in the soil for 10-15 years.
- Seeds are easily spread by wind, machinery and vehicles, and by slashing, and also by adhering to animals, clothing and footwear.
- Ripe seed heads break off and disperse on winds for several kilometres.

Similar native species: Can be mistaken for native Tussock Grasses *Poa* sp., and Wallaby Grasses *Austrodanthonia* sp.

Status: Weed of National Significance, Regionally Controlled Weed.

Weed treatment:

