



WEED IDENTIFICATION NOTES

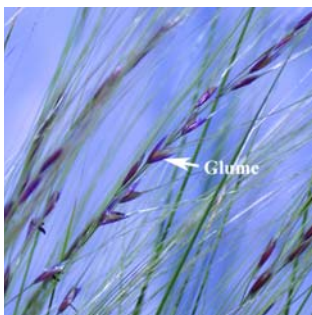


Description

The most distinguishing features of Mexican feather grass include:

- Perennial grass forming dense tussocks
- Grows up to 1 metre high
- Leaf blades are very fine, about 0.5 millimetres wide and are tightly rolled
- Flowers mostly in late spring and summer
- The seed head is open but slender and about 10 – 30 centimetres long
- Mature seed is 1.5 – 2 millimetres long with a 5 – 9 centimetre long awn.

This plant can look similar to some *Poa* spp. and *Austrostipa* spp.



Mexican feather grass flower head
Photo: Alan Maguire NSW
Department of Primary Industries

Mexican feather grass (*Nassella tenuissima*) is a serious invasive weed and is a declared plant under the *Natural Resources Management Act 2004*. As a declared plant it is illegal to introduce, sell or move Mexican feather grass within South Australia. Landholders with this plant on their property are required to notify the Adelaide and Mount Lofty Ranges NRM Board of its presence and must carry out appropriate control.



Mexican feather grass is a densely tufted perennial grass, closely related to Serrated Tussock

Reproduction and dispersal

Mexican feather grass reproduces by seed with each plant capable of producing hundreds of seeds each season. The seeds are small and light and are easily spread by the wind or by becoming attached to animals, clothing and vehicles.

Impacts of invasion

Mexican feather grass impacts on the environment by:

- Out competing and replacing native plants
- Forming an under story monoculture
- Reducing native fauna habitat

Mexican feather grass also has low feed value and palatability and can impact grazing productivity by replacing pasture grasses and dominating paddock growth.

Mexican feather grass is closely related to Serrated Tussock which is now widely spread across Victoria. It is thought that Mexican feather grass is just as, if not more, invasive as Serrated Tussock and that its potential range is far greater.

Distribution

Mexican feather grass was introduced into the Adelaide region in 2006 to 2008 by the nursery trade when it was incorrectly labelled and sold as either:

- *Stipa capillata*
- *Stipa capriccio*
- *Stipa tenuissima* 'Angels Hair'

From the sales during this period it is thought that approximately 150 plants may have been sold as drought tolerant garden ornamentals across the Adelaide metropolitan area and the Fleurieu Peninsula.





Detection and control

Finding and destroying the plants sold before they naturalise and spread elsewhere is the main key to preventing the establishment of Mexican feather grass within the Adelaide region.

It is important that any infestations are detected early when they are small and are easier to destroy. Check the identity of any new or unusual grass plants on your property or in your area as soon as you become aware of them.

Mexican feather grass should be controlled prior to seed where possible. If plants have been allowed to seed, then ongoing control on germinating seedlings may be required for a number of years.

Plants may be controlled by grubbing them out or by the application of a knockdown herbicide. Further information on control may be obtained by contacting your local Board office.

What to do if you suspect you have Mexican feather grass

If you suspect that you have Mexican feather grass in your garden or on your property please check the plant against the description and photographs contained within this information note.

If you think the plant you have looks similar (or even if you are not sure) contact your local Board office and arrange for a Board staff member to visit your property. This is a free service and they will also be able to provide you with information on control techniques if necessary.

Please note that Mexican feather grass is a notifiable plant under the *NRM Act* and landholders must notify the Board if they detect the plant on their property.

Board policy

Mexican feather grass is an Alert species based on the Board's pest plant risk assessment:

Alert: Aims to prevent the species arriving and establishing in the region:

- i. Prevention of entry to the region.
- ii. Ongoing surveillance for incursions of species (e.g. nursery inspections).
- iii. Training and awareness activities for the community to enable early detection.



Declarations

The following sections of the NRM Act apply to Mexican feather grass in all local government areas in the Adelaide and Mount Lofty Ranges NRM region:

- 175** (1) **Cannot bring the plant into the region**
 (2) **Cannot transport the plant or anything with the plant in it**
- 177** (1) **Cannot sell the plant**
 (2) **Cannot sell any produce/goods carrying the plant**
- 180** (1) **Land owner must notify the NRM authority of the presence of the plant on their land**
 (2) **NRM authority must notify the Chief Officer**
 (3) **Chief Officer must notify NRM Authority**
- 182** (1) **Land owner must destroy the plant on their land**
 (3) **Land owner must take prescribed measures for the control of the plant on their land**
- 185** (1) **NRM authority may recover costs for control of weeds on roadsides from adjoining land owners**

Contacts

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