

Pampas grass

Cortaderia jubata and *Cortaderia selloana*

What is council doing about this?

In the Hutt City area, if pampas is encroaching from a reserve onto the property of an adjacent landowner or has become a fire hazard, Hutt City Council will clear the shared boundary of pampas.

What does it look like?

Pampas is a perennial, tussock-like grass. The two species (*Cortaderia jubata* and *Cortaderia selloana*) both have coarse abrasive leaves that are bluish green above and dark-green below, with a conspicuous midrib. Pampas grows 2-3m high and has flowering stems, which can be up to 5m high, have distinctive, erect, fluffy white or pinky-purple flower heads. Pampas may be confused with the three native toe toe species which have more creamy-yellow flower heads. The pampas species also have dead leaf bases which spiral, resembling wood shavings.

Pampas inhabits a range of areas including dunelands, plantation forests, quarries, roadsides and disturbed native forests. It will establish most easily in wet, sandy or bare soil and is tolerant of drought once established.

Why is it a problem?

Pampas plants are highly competitive once seedlings are established, and can out compete native plants. Very invasive forming dense, often impenetrable stands. Colonises and becomes dense quickly, suppressing the growth of other vegetation including groundcovers, shrubs and ferns. Often followed by weedy vines. The rapid growth and accumulation of biomass above and below ground results in a domination of light, moisture and nutrient supply. In plantation forests, much of the fertiliser applied to trees is consumed by Pampas. Also forms habitat for pests such as rats, rabbits and possums which may have a detrimental impact on surrounding vegetation.

Produces flowering stems of up to 5m in the summer period from January to March (*C. jubata*), and in Autumn from March to May (*C. selloana*). Produces a very large amount of seeds (up to 100,000 with one plant able to produce millions of seeds over 10 - 15 years) that are predominantly dispersed by wind up to 50 kilometres. Seeds do not require fertilisation, and as such all seeds produced are viable and can result in the growth of a large number of seedlings.



Pampas grass

Cortaderia jubata and *Cortaderia selloana*



Control Methods

Physical control

Dig or grub out seedlings or small plants. Chainsaw small plants and remove sizeable plants by bulldozer. Compost or leave on site to rot down. Burn or bury any flowerheads.

Herbicide control

Weed wipe (all year round): glyphosate (200ml/L + penetrant). Or,

Spray: Gallant (150ml/10l + crop oil) for most sites or glyphosate (100ml/10L + penetrant) for very dense sites. Use a marker dye to avoid wastage and a foaming agent to help prevent spray drift. Leave the plants in the ground until the roots have died off.

Establish that the species is not the native toetoe (look for erect seed heads in autumn) before attempting control.

CAUTION: When using any herbicide or pesticide, PLEASE READ THE LABEL THOROUGHLY to ensure that all instructions and safety requirements are followed.

Related Links

Ministry for Primary Industries <http://apps.mpi.govt.nz/applications/nzpests-view/Article/621/Pampas>

New Zealand Plant Conservation Network http://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora_details.aspx?ID=3753

Unwanted Organisms Register (Purple pampas) https://www1.maf.govt.nz/uor-cgi/uor.pl/show?species_id=36654

Unwanted Organisms Register (Pampas grass) https://www1.maf.govt.nz/uor-cgi/uor.pl/show?species_id=36652

Weedbusters <https://www.weedbusters.org.nz/what-are-weeds/weed-list/pampas/>

Hutt City Council pest plant programme <https://www.huttcity.govt.nz/environment-and-sustainability/what-you-can-do/pest-plant-programme>

Rules

Under Section 52 and 53 of the Biosecurity Act 1993 no person can sell, propagate, breed, distribute or otherwise spread any pest in a Pest Management Plan, or any unwanted organism. Not complying with Section 52 or 53 is an offence under the Act, and may result in penalties noted in Section 157(1).

An occupier shall, on receipt of a written direction from an authorised person, destroy* all banana passionfruit, cathedral bells, climbing asparagus, old man's beard, and pampas on the land they occupy. This rule only applies to the Hutt City Council territory.

*For the purposes of this rule, destroy means the permanent preclusion of the plant's ability to set viable seed.

The National Pest Plant Accord is designed to prevent the sale, distribution and propagation of a set list of pest plants (the Accord list) within New Zealand. If allowed to spread further, these pest plants could seriously damage the New Zealand economy and environment.

Management Programme

Site-led