

African feather grass

Poaceae - Cenchrus macrourus



What does it look like?

African feather grass is a perennial grass that forms large clumps up to two metres tall. From November to April, it produces long, thin flower heads with distinctive yellow to purple flowers and prominent bristles. When ripe, the spikelets containing the seed fall away, leaving the bare stem. The shape of the flower head distinguishes it from the fluffy flower heads of pampas grass and toe toe. African feather grass has been found in pasture, roadsides, urban areas, wasteland, swamps and stream banks.

Why is it a problem?

African feather grass can suppress low-growing plants and restrict movement of animals, people and machinery. It impairs drainage and visibility along roads, creates a fire hazard and provides cover for pest species. African feather grass is very persistent (recovers quickly after being damaged), difficult to eradicate and drought-resistant. The seeds of African feather grass are dispersed by wind, water, and in animal hair or clothing (barbed bristles on the seed husk enable them to become entangled in fibres). Rhizomes are spread by machinery/cultivation or by dumping plant material/soil.

Control methods

Physical control

- Small infestations can be removed by hand (do not allow to seed).

Herbicide control

- Spray with 150ml/10L water at haloxyfop (96.8g/l haloxyfop) + 50ml/10L crop oil.
- Spray 100-200ml glyphosate (10 litres water (360g/l glyphosate).

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

[Request info](https://eservices.es.govt.nz/online-services/new/BiosecurityRFS/step/1?Subject=PlantPests&Species=193)

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Management programme

- Organisms of interest

Summary of rules

- No person can sell, propagate, breed, distribute or otherwise spread any African feather grass. For full rules please see Sections 52 and 53 of the [Biosecurity Act 1993](#).