



Government of South Australia  
Adelaide and Mount Lofty Ranges  
Natural Resources Management Board

# FACT SHEET

## Pampas Grass (*Cortaderia Species*)

### DESCRIPTION

A genus of large perennial tussock grasses, that grows to a height of 2 to 6 metres. Leaves are grey with pale yellow base and rough sharp serrated edges. Flowers occur in a dense panicle 25-100 centimetres on a stem up to 3 meters long in late summer or autumn. Flower heads are feathery in appearance and are white to cream in colour. Plants are either female or bisexual, with female plants requiring pollination by bisexual plants. Seeds germinate in spring with multiple tillers and rhizomes produced over time. Most plants will not flower in their first year.

### DISPERSAL

Individual plants have the ability to produce vast amounts of windborne seed, up to 100,000 per flower head, which can disperse up to 25 kilometres. The tiny 2 mm seeds can travel on wind currents, or float spreading down creeks and drainage lines. They are also spread from plant fragments which have been dumped. All parts of the tough root system are capable of growing a new plant. They are spread along roadsides, watercourses and disturbed areas associated with recreational activities especially in the damper areas of the Adelaide and Mount Lofty Ranges.

### ORIGIN / DISTRIBUTION

Pampas grass was introduced to Australia originally from South America. Widely established in ornamental gardens and used as a wind break and fodder plant in agriculture. Isolated infestations have started to spread in the higher rainfall areas of the Adelaide Hills.

### PROBLEM

This large, long lived, tough and dense clumping tussock, which grows to a height of 6 metres high with flower heads, will displace native species, and if left unchecked can form into impenetrable thickets. Pampas grass is fond of damp areas and will quickly invade watercourses and urban bush land. It produces large quantities of flammable material so dense infestations increase the bush fire risk and increase fire control hazards. Can occupy pine plantations after harvesting and compete with pine seedlings. It provides nesting sites for introduced birds and rodents and the knife edged leaves will cut skin.

### STATUS

Currently in all of South Australia, Pink Pampas Grass (*Cortaderia jubata*) and Toetoe (*Cortaderia richardii*) are declared species for eradication under the *Natural Resources Management Act 2004*.

*Cortaderia selloana* is the common Pampas Grass species now invading bush land in the Adelaide Hills. The Adelaide and Mount Lofty Ranges Natural Resources Management Board is working with landholders to restrict and control this weedy species.

## CONTROL

### Aim

To prevent the spread of Pampas Grass. Eradicate small infestations, contain and reduce larger infestations. Destroy root system, establish desirable species.

### Methods

A combination of methods will give the best long term results. De seed by cutting off plumes (flower heads) and seal them in a plastic bag for disposal. Use hand-grub or cultivate to remove root system. Spray with herbicides only when actively growing. Thoroughly wet all foliage. Grubbing may encourage growth from the remaining root system.

## HERBICIDES

**Use away from susceptible desirable species such as vegetables, native trees, crops, pastures and grape vines. Use only as per chemical label directions.** Treat only during active growth (Spring to Autumn as a guide depends on season and area). Apply to actively growing plants. Ensure complete coverage of the foliage. Where there is a large proportion of dead foliage, pre slashing is recommended. Allow adequate regrowth before treatment.

**Glyphosate** bio active (360 g/L) at 10 ml with 1 litre clean water. Avoid treatment of desirable plants. Regrowth may occur and re-treatment will be required.

**WARNING:** Some warning statements and precautions have been omitted. **Read and understand the herbicide label.** Use is at the reader's discretion but must conform to the requirements of the Agricultural Chemicals Act and no warranty is implied.

**For further information please contact your nearest Natural Resources Management (NRM) office:**

Gawler - 8 Adelaide Road ph 08 8523 7700 | Lobethal - 1 Adelaide Lobethal Road ph 08 8389 5900  
Willunga - 5 Aldinga Road ph 08 8550 3400 | Eastwood - 205 Greenhill Road ph 08 8273 9100

*Photograph Kate Blood Cortaderia selloana common Pampas Grass*

