

Crimson Fountain Grass & Swamp Foxtail Grass

Pennisetum setaceum

Pennisetum alopecuroides

A very popular landscape grass, it is now an offence to sell, propagate or knowingly distribute *Pennisetum setaceum*.

Family: Poaceae

Origin: Africa, Eastern Australia

Habit: Tufted or clump-forming perennial grass to 1m.

Leaves: Thin leathery, arching leaves to 80cm long, with prominent veins.

Flowers: Inflorescence spike-like and feathery, purplish, at the end of long canes. Flowering time: Summer-Winter. *P. setaceum* – seed heads to 30cm long, *P. alopecuroides* – seed heads to 8cm long.

Seed: Both species strongly self-seed. Some new varieties are claimed to have low seed viability.

Roots: Fibrous and shallow.

Dispersal: Seed spread by water, wind, humans, contaminated soil (earth-moving equipment, car tyres etc) and garden refuse dumping.

Control: In bushland situations: Hand dig (bag seed heads), Foliar spray. In the garden: cut flower heads before seeding, bag and dispose of by deep burial at a waste management centre.



Liriope/Lily Turf

Liriope spp.

This is a very popular garden plant that is used extensively in landscaping for its hardiness in extreme conditions. It is just starting to become a problem in shaded riparian areas.

Family: Ruscaceae

Origin: East Asia

Habit: Clump forming and spreading, grass like perennial lily.

Leaves: Glossy dark green, narrow straplike, dense linear foliage from 20-50cm long and then recurves toward the ground to form rounded clumps.

Flowers: Spikes of small purple, violet or white flowers rise from the center of clumps.

Fruit: Black, pea sized berries, each containing one seed.

Roots: Dense, fibrous root mass. Some species develop fleshy tubers.

Dispersal: Seed spread by water and humans via contaminated soil and garden refuse dumping. Spread locally by seed falling from plant and rhizomes

Control: In bushland situations: Hand dig (bag seed heads), Foliar spray.
In the garden: cut flower heads before seeding, bag and dispose of by deep burial at a waste management centre.

Active management is necessary in all garden situations to prevent this plant from degrading bushland.



Pampas Grass

Cortaderia spp.

A very popular garden plant in the 1960's and 1970's, Pampas Grass has earned its status as a declared noxious weed.

Family: Poaceae

Origin: South America and New Zealand

Habit: Large, long lived perennial tussock forming ornamental grass to 4.5m tall.

Leaves: Light green, up to 2m long and finely tapering with prominent midrib and sharp edges that will cut the skin. A rim of hairs (to 3mm long) at leaf base (ligule).

Flowers: Large feathery heads on stems to 3m tall. White-biege (*C. selloana*), or pink-mauve (*C. jubata*). Up to 50 plumes formed on one mature plant. Both single sex and bisexual plants exist. Summer-Winter.

Seed: Small (2mm), short-lived, up to 100,000 seeds set per plume.

Roots: Strong fibrous root with rhizomes capable of re-shooting.

Dispersal: Seed spread by water, wind, humans, contaminated soil (earthmoving equipment, car tyres etc) and garden refuse dumping.

Control: Crowning, Slash and hand dig with mattock, Foliar spray. Bag all seed heads.



Panic Veldt Grass

Ehrharta erecta

An aggressive, perennial grass almost constantly in seed, Ehrharta spreads rapidly excluding many small native ground cover species. Similar Native Species: Weeping Meadow Grass (*Microlaena stipoides*).

Family: Poaceae

Origin: South Africa

Habit: Vigorous, shade-tolerant, rhizomatous and loosely tufted perennial grass, that will out-compete native ground covers in nearly all soil conditions.

Leaves: Bright green, flat leaf blade with soft hairs on surface, to 5-20cm long, 2-10mm wide, Stems rounded, prominent mid-vein on the underside of leaf. perennial grass, that will out-compete native ground covers in nearly all soil conditions.

Flowers: Inflorescences borne on stems, 10-80cm long and grow at any time during the year. The stem can be upright or curved, often branched near the base and sometimes tinged red.

Seed: Profuse and rapid production of 3mm long and oval-shaped, shiny seeds. They range from immature green to a bleached, dry appearance. Seeding occurs every 6 weeks and viability approaches 100%.

Roots: Relatively weak and fibrous, easily removed by hand.

Dispersal: Seed spread by water, animals (mainly birds), humans, contaminated soil (earthmoving equipment, car tyres etc) and garden refuse dumping.

Control: Hand pull/dig, bag all seed heads. Foliar spray.



Mexican Feather Grass

Nassella tenuissima

Initially mislabelled and sold as an ornamental in Australia under the names Elegant Spear Grass, Pony Tail and Angel's Hair, Mexican Feather Grass needs to be prevented from naturalising in Australia.

Family: Poaceae

Origin: South America

Habit: Drooping perennial tussock forming grass which grows in dense clumps. up to 0.8m in height.

Leaves: Leaf blades to 0.5mm wide, tightly rolled and with small serrations that can be felt when fingers are moved downward along the blade. Distinguished by hairless nodes, some usually visible; ligule membranous and hairless, to 2.5mm long.

Flowers: Seedhead: Young seedheads held among the leaves; mature seedhead to 25cm long; glumes purplish in the lower half to 1cm long; callus bearded. Flowers summer.

Seed: Lemma to 3mm long, awn narrow, straight or obscurely twice bent, 4.5-9cm long; attached centrally to the top of the lemma.

Roots: Fibrous clump.

Dispersal: Seed spread by water, animals, humans, contaminated soil (earth-moving equipment, slashers, mowers etc) and as an ornamental.

Control: Hand pull/dig, bag all seed heads. Foliar spray.

This grass is a weed in its native range. If it naturalises in Australia it potentially has a wider range than Serrated Tussock. Mexican Feather Grass escaped from cultivation in New Zealand and has become a weed that is continuing to spread.



Shrub Weeds

The shrub weeds are often the most prolific, because of the fact that they are a common addition to many home gardens.

The main problem arises from the irresponsible dumping of garden waste in bushland and reserves bordering on home gardens and inadequate garden maintenance allowing plants to seed and spread to nearby areas via wind and water or in the droppings of fauna that have eaten them.

The main weed species are featured on their own pages but below is a list of:-

Other Problematic Shrubs Weeds

Common Name	Botanical Name
Butterfly Bush*	<i>Buddleja davidii/Buddleja madagascariensis</i>
Castor Oil Plant	<i>Ricinus communis</i>
Cotton Bush	<i>Gomphocarpus fruticosus</i>
Elderberry	<i>Sambucus nigra</i>
Gorse	<i>Ulex europaeus</i>
Guavas	<i>Psidium guajava/Psidium cattleianum</i>
Hawthorns	<i>Crataegus</i> spp.
Milk Wort/Purple Broom	<i>Polygala myrtifolia, P. virgata</i>
Montpellier Broom	<i>Genista monspessulana</i>
Orange Jessamine*	<i>Murraya paniculata</i> (seed grown species)
Oleander*	<i>Nerium oleander</i> (single flowering species)

Cassia/Winter Senna

Senna pendula var. *glabrata*

Another similar *Senna* species is *Senna floribunda* which is characterised by a more pointed leaf.

- Family: Caesalpiniaceae
Origin: South America
Habit: A straggly, multi-stemmed evergreen shrub 1-3m high. Stems brown and woody with thin cambium layer.
Leaves: Leaves are compound, with 3-8 pairs of opposite leaflets. There is a raised gland between the lowest pair of leaflets.
Flowers: Bright yellow, to 3cm, produce in large numbers, with protruding stamens. Flowers March/April.
Fruit: Cylindrical green bean-like pods, 10-20cm long, each containing 20-40 seeds. Pods turn brown and desiccate when ripe.
Roots: Woody, branching and relatively shallow. Will re-shoot from any root stock left in the ground.
Dispersal: Seed spread by water, animals (foxes, rats & birds), humans, contaminated soil (earthmoving equipment, car tyres etc) and garden refuse dumping.
Control: Hand pull/dig juvenile plants, cut and paint, scrape and paint and paint or foliar spray adult plants.



Coral Berry

Ardisia crenata

A common indoor plant due to its low light requirements, *Ardisia* has escaped cultivation and is recorded weedy from the Mullumbimby area to Sydney.

Family: Myrsinaceae

Origin: NE India, China to Japan

Habit: Evergreen, compact shrub 1-2m high with a bushy head.

Leaves: Dark glossy green above, paler and dull below, elliptic to slightly oblanceolate, 5-12cm long, 1.5-3.5cm wide; margins serrated and crinkled.

Flowers: Inflorescence is a many-flowered, umbel. Flowers rather inconspicuous, white and starry, petals 4mm long. Summer – Autumn.

Fruit: Scarlet red globose berry, 5-8mm diam. Long lasting usually persisting through Winter.

Roots: Shallow and fibrous.

Dispersal: Seed spread by water, animals (foxes, rats & birds), humans, contaminated soil (earthmoving equipment, car tyres etc) and garden refuse dumping.

Control: Hand pull/dig, scrape and paint, foliar spray.



Cotoneaster

Cotoneaster spp.

At least nine species of *Cotoneaster* have naturalised in Australia. There are numerous native alternatives available which will attract birds to the garden

- Family: Malaceae (often included in Rosaceae)
- Origin: China, Asia
- Habit: Evergreen shrub or small tree to 4m high usually with arching branches.
- Leaves: Varying with species but, usually elliptic to ovate 1.5-4cm wide, green above paler or silvery below. Young growth often woolly.
- Flowers: White clusters. Each flower about 8mm wide, 5-petaled. Flower stalk densely hairy. Spring and summer.
- Fruit: Red fleshy fruit (pome) 6-10mm long, almost globe-shaped. Containing 2 yellowish, flattened seeds.
- Roots: Substantial woody tap and lateral root system.
- Dispersal: Seed spread by water, animals (mainly birds), humans, contaminated soil (earthmoving equipment, car tyres etc) and garden refuse dumping. The main problem is that people plant *Cotoneaster* to attract birds to the garden.
- Control: Hand pull/dig juvenile plants. Cut and Paint or Scrape and Paint mature plants.



Indian Hawthorn

Raphiolepis indica

A commonly cultivated garden plant especially in coastal areas due to its ability to tolerate drought conditions. Less weedy or sterile cultivars may be available.

- Family: Malaceae
Origin: Asia, especially India and southern China
Habit: Drought hardy, evergreen, low growing, spreading shrub to 1-1.5m high.
Leaves: Dark green on top, paler below; thick, leathery, serrated, ovate to elliptic or obovate, 3-7cm long, 5-30mm wide, pubescent or hairy at first, sharply toothed.
Flowers: Panicle of star shaped flowers 10mm diam. Petals are white or pink, with five petals, and may be lightly fragrant.
Fruit: Blue-black pome fruits each containing 1 or 2 seeds.
Roots: Extensive lateral, woody and relatively deep.
Dispersal: Seed spread by animals (mainly birds), humans, contaminated soil (earthmoving equipment, car tyres etc) and garden refuse dumping.
Control: Hand pull/dig, cut and paint, foliar spray.



Mickey Mouse Plant

Ochna serrulata

The long tap root makes manual removal extremely difficult and it seeds far too easily into Sydney's bushland

- Family: Ochnaceae
Origin: South Africa
Habit: A dense evergreen shrub 2-4m high with rough stems. Bark has numerous lenticels (corky spots) protruding outwardly.
Leaves: Alternately arranged oblong to lanceolate leaves to 6cm long, glossy green on both surfaces, slightly paler below. Leaf margins finely serrated and often wavy, new growth is reddish-brown in colour.
Flowers: Yellow with 5 petals in Spring-Summer. Green calyx turns red after petals drop and fruit matures.
Fruit: Succulent green berries to 8mm across, in clusters of 4-6. Ripen to black in Summer. Each berry contains a single seed.
Roots: Strong tap-root formed, with characteristic kink that renders it susceptible to breaking. Will reshoot form any root stock left in ground.
Dispersal: Seed spread by water, animals (foxes, rats & birds), humans, contaminated soil (earthmoving equipment, car tyres etc) and garden refuse dumping.
Control: Hand pull/dig juvenile plants. Scrape and Paint. *Hard to kill.



Pigeon Berry/Golden Dewdrop

Duranta erecta cultivars

This new vogue plant to the Sydney region has become naturalised in some areas. It requires active management in all gardens.

Family: Verbenaceae

Origin: West Indies, Central and South America

Habit: A straggly evergreen shrub 1-5m high with drooping branches and sharp spines.

Leaves: The ovate leaves are 2.5-7.6cm long and arranged on the stem in pairs opposite each other, or in whorls of three.

Flowers: Showy inflorescences bloom almost all year long in terminal or lateral racemes up to 15cm long. The individual flowers are tubular with five petals, white, light blue, violet or purple, and spread out at the mouth about 1cm across.

Fruit: Spherical yellow berry to 1.5cm in diameter borne in showy hanging bunches.

Roots: Substantial tap and lateral root system.

Dispersal: Seed spread by water, animals (mainly birds), humans, contaminated soil (earthmoving equipment, car tyres etc) and garden refuse dumping.

Control: Hand pull/dig. Cut and Paint or Scrape and Paint, foliar spray.

