

GRASSES AND SEDGES

Grass: A plant that usually consists of a tuft of leaves arising from a stem that elongates at flowering time.

Sedge: A grass-like plant with a triangular stem often growing in wet areas.

1GROUND
COVERS**2**GRASSES &
SEDGES**3**

VINES

4

SHRUBS

5

TREES

BASKET GRASS AND TAHITIAN BRIDAL VEIL

NATIVE

Name Basket Grass
(*Oplismenus imbecillis*, *O. aemulus*)

Family Poaceae

Habit Creeping grass

Habitat Found in the Eastern and Northern States of Australia. It grows in moist areas to shady areas and can sometimes be found in full shade.

Leaves Has low growing sprawling stems, with 1cm wide leaves. The leaves have wavy margins and fine hairs.
O. imbecillis has longer narrower leaves than *O. aemulus*.

Flowers Small red floral parts with a red awn atop a green grain.

Fruit/seed Spreads vegetatively.

WEED

Name Tahitian Bridal Veil (*Gibasis pellucida* syn. *Tradescantia pellucida* or *T. multiflora*)

Family Commelinaceae

Habit A ground herb.

Habitat Weed is a garden escape, mostly planted in gardens or used in hanging pots.

Leaves Hairless with tiny, shiny leaves and wiry stems.

Flowers It has small white flowers, which produce a fine 'veil'.

Fruit/seed 2.5mm ovoid capsules.

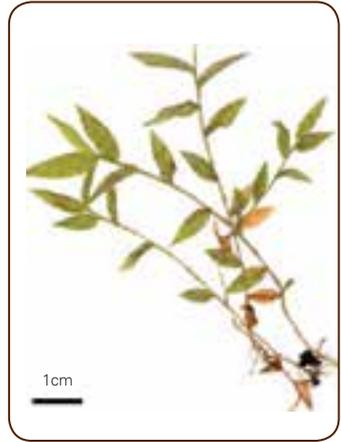
Origin Mexico and Central America

DISTINCTIVE FEATURES

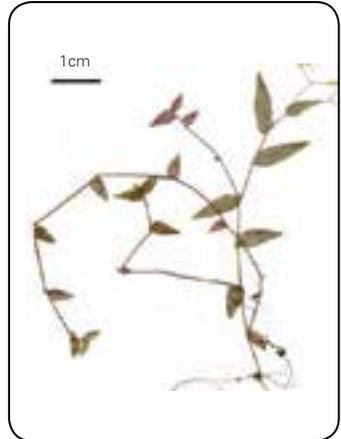
While Tahitian Bridal Veil is not particularly invasive it can be mistaken for a native. It looks and grows very much like a smaller version of the native Commelina. *O. imbecillis* and *O. aemulus* have small red flowers which appear in summer to autumn on short erect stems. In shady conditions when it is very humid and moist *Oplismenus* seed heads can be covered with powdery mildew giving them a white frosted appearance. This grass is very hardy and has an ornamental quality about it. It makes a great native lawn that can look very neat when mowed.

WEED REMOVAL

Be aware that nodes left in the ground will re-sprout.



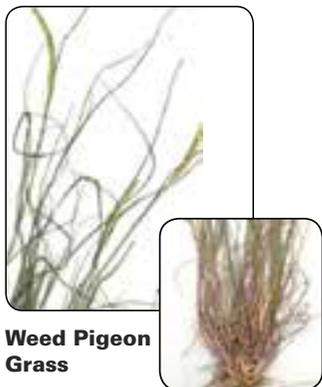
Native Basket Grass



Weed Tahitian Bridal Veil



Native Hedgehog Grass



Weed Pigeon Grass

DISTINCTIVE FEATURES

Setaria grasses are characterised by their stiff bristled seed head. Pigeon grass has quite large rounded seed that will drop off and the bristles remain. The seed on pigeon grass ripen late spring to summer. This grass is spread by wind, mud, animals and in feed. It germinates very easily, so needs careful treatment. *Echinopogon* is distinguishable by the small 5mm long ovoid shaped seed heads that look like a small brush. When it is not in seed though, the grass is fairly easily identified at 60-120cm tall, tufted with curled leaves around the base. Seed spreads via attachment to fur or clothing. Unfortunately Pigeon grass is also an important food source for a variety of birds including quails, lapwings, choughs, scrub-wrens and finches.

WEED REMOVAL

Removal ideal before the plant seeds (prior to spring).



HEDGEHOG GRASS AND PIGEON GRASS

NATIVE

- Name** Hedgehog grass (*Echinopogon ovatus*, *E. caespitosus*)
- Family** Poaceae
- Habit** Perennial grass to 1.2m high.
- Habitat** Grows on rich soils in sunny or shady positions.
- Leaves** Bright green and slightly hairy, short and membranous. The grass is rough and when touched with a downward action feels like it is sticking to you.
- Flowers** Flowers in spring.
- Fruit/Seed** Small 5mm long ovoid shaped seed heads that look like a small brush.

WEED

- Name** Pigeon grass (*Setaria sp.*)
- Family** Poaceae
- Habit** Perennial grass up to 1m high.
- Habitat** This grass can be found in disturbed sunny positions, along roadsides and along disturbed bushland edges.
- Leaves** Leaf blade is often rolled or folded, and the leaf base can often be red. Sometimes the leaf base will break off where it meets the roots. This plant can also spread via rhizomes, in this form it can often die back in winter.
- Flowers** Is a terminal panicle which is narrow, dense and spike like to around 3-5cm in length.
- Fruit/seed** The seed is contained in the remains of the old flowers and when dispersed leaves behind the bristles of the seed head.
- Origin** South Africa

BARBED WIRE GRASS AND WHISKY GRASS

NATIVE

- Name** Barbed-wire grass
(*Cymbopogon refractus*)
- Habit** Perennial tufted grass with tall wiry stems to 1m high.
- Habitat** Woodland areas on sandstone. Found in most parts of NSW, Qld, Vic and NT.
- Leaves** Green, about 30cm long.
- Flowers** Its inflorescence resembles the barbs of barbed-wire. This is due to the racemes which point downwards on maturity. Flowers mostly spring-autumn.
- Fruit/Seed** Dry, one seeded.

WEED

- Name** Whisky Grass (*Andropogon virginicus*)
- Habit** Erect perennial grass to 1m tall
- Habitat** Open sunny areas, roadsides, fire-trails, fields and other disturbed areas. It is common to Hawkesbury sandstone and other low nutrient soils.
- Leaves** Leaf blades hairy near the base.
- Flowers** Flowers 2-3cm long. Flowers in summer.
- Fruit/seed** Seeds on a stalk up to 5mm long.
- Origin** North America

DISTINCTIVE FEATURES

Barbed wire grass has an aromatic smell when crushed and it is interesting to know that the commonly used cooking herb, Lemon Grass (*Cymbopogon citratus*) and other *Cymbopogon*s have a lemon scent to them. Whisky grass can be very invasive, and produces wind dispersed seed which can lie dormant in the soil throughout the winter. Whisky Grass can also look like the native Kangaroo grass *Themeda australis*.

WEED REMOVAL

It is important to remove this grass before it sets seed in spring. If the grass has fluffy seed in the tops these should be cut off and bagged before disposal.



Native Barbed Wire Grass



Weed Whisky Grass

POA AFFINIS AND AFRICAN LOVE GRASS

NATIVE

Name *Poa affinis*

Habit Loosely tufted with branched stems.

Habitat Sydney, Blue Mountains. Widespread in the Hornsby area. It grows shaded hillsides and in the understorey of woodlands and forests primarily on sandstone soils.

Leaves Soft light green leaves and a small blunt and membranous ligule.

Flowers The inflorescence is a spreading open seed head with blue green spikelets made up of 2-4 florets. Flowers in late spring, early summer and can range from 60cm to 1.2m in height.

Fruit/seed Straw coloured seed heads

WEED

Name African Lovegrass (*Eragrostis curvula*)

Habit Robust, densely tufted perennial grass growing to 1-2m in height.

Habitat Is very invasive and hardy growing particularly well along roadsides, railways, riverbanks and wastelands.

Leaves Long stems with green to blue leaf blades. These are rough to touch and often arch and curl up to the tip (hence 'curvula'). The ligule has an inconspicuous ring of hairs enclosed by auricles (collar).

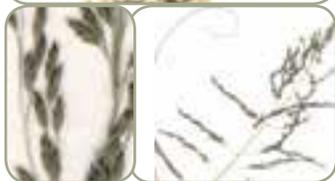
Flowers Quite similar to the Poa, but has a dark olive-green spikelet consisting of 3-18 florets. Flowers in summer.

Fruit/seed Flowering seed heads can be up to 30cm long.

Origin South Africa



**Native
*Poa
affinis***



Weed African Love Grass

DISTINCTIVE FEATURES

The weed is quite similar to the native, but has a dark olive-green spikelet consisting of 3-18 florets as opposed to the blue-green spikelet of 2-4 florets of the Poa. Also, unlike Poa, African Lovegrass seeds are often subject to a black rust. The native Poa has a preference for shaded moist conditions where the African Lovegrass is highly tolerant of drought conditions.

WEED REMOVAL

Due to its matted root system, a mattock or lever would be most useful. As the native and weed look so similar check also for the spikelet colour and the distinctive curling of leaf blades on the weed before removal or spent inflorescences.



WEeping MEADOW GRASS

AND PANIC VELDTGRASS

NATIVE

Name Weeping Meadow grass (*Microlaena stipoides*)

Habit Slender erect grass 15-70cm high.

Habitat Grows widespread on sandstone and clay soils across Australia except N.T.

Leaves Often has a bluish green tinge to its leaves which are short, flat and thin growing from tufts. The leaves can be smooth or sometimes hairy and the leaf tip has a small indent which is a good indication that it is the native.

Flowers Flowers from late spring to autumn.

Fruit/Seed Has a variety of forms but all with the same distinctive weeping seed head. Each seed has a spike attached to it that helps its distribution by getting caught on socks, clothes, fur and feathers etc. Has relatively large seeds, over 1cm.

WEED

Name Panic Veldtgrass (*Ehrharta erecta*)

Family Poaceae

Habit Can grow up to 60cm, although usually remains about 30cm tall. It spreads out from the root base allowing the seed heads to colonise new soil.

Habitat Grows in sunny positions particularly in disturbed zones.

Leaves Bright green leaves bordering on a green yellow in some situations.

Flowers Flowers in spring and summer.

Fruit/seed Seed head is erect, 6-20cm long. Seeds prolifically and sometimes year round.

Origin South Africa

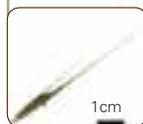
DISTINCTIVE FEATURES

Microlaena and *Ehrharta* have very different seed heads. *Microlaena* is weeping where the seed head on *Ehrharta* is erect. *Microlaena* leaves are generally rougher, thinner and darker green than *Ehrharta* which is a much brighter green to yellow green and wider. *Microlaena* can form clumped runners. At the margin between the leaf sheath and the leaf blade *Ehrharta* also has a ligule which is far less prominent in *Microlaena*.

WEED REMOVAL

It is important to try to prevent it from seeding as it seeds prolifically especially in exposed areas.

Ehrharta seed should be bagged for disposal or composted. Fortnightly follow up can achieve good results.



Native Meadow Grass



Weed Panic Veldtgrass



Seed Heads:
Microlaena (left) and *Ehrharta* (right).

SPINY HEADED MAT RUSH AND WILD IRIS

NATIVE

- Name** Spiny Headed Mat Rush (*Lomandra longifolia*)
Family Lomandraceae
Habit Tufted, grass-like herb. Grows 50-100cm.
Habitat Fairly common and grows in a wide range of habitats.
Leaves Wide strap-like leaves usually around 50 cm long, which are distinguishable by their hairless, conspicuous marginal sclerenchyma bands. The leaf apex or tip of this native is 2 or 3 toothed, with the central tooth pronounced. There are a few different forms of the teeth and these are generally orange brown or reddish brown.

- Flowers** The flower spike of *L. longifolia* stands shorter than the leaf blades reaching maximum 15cm long. Flower clusters are whorled up the prickly, branched inflorescence and appear yellow or cream. They have male and female plants distinguished by their flowers. Male flowers are shorter at 3.5mm, where the female are around 4.5mm long. Flowers in spring only.

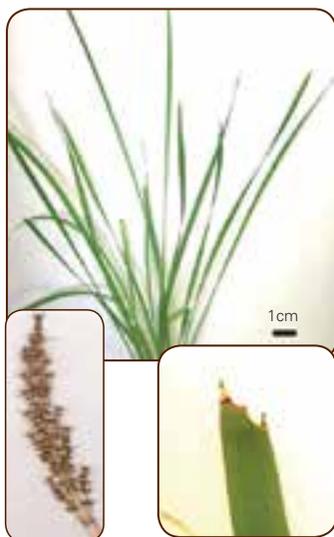
- Fruit/seed** Seeds like wheat grains. Easy propagation.

WEED

- Name** Wild Iris (*Diets grandiflora*)
Family Iridaceae
Habit Tufted herb
Habitat Tolerant of poor dry soils and grows in a range of conditions.
Leaves Long strappy leaves of about 50cm.
Flowers White, yellow and mauve iris-like flowers appear in spring to summer.
Fruit/seed Produces numerous 3 celled capsules. Abundant seed.
Origin South Africa

Diets is not a particularly invasive plant. Its seed head is very different to the Mat Rush.

The leaves are shinier and slightly thinner with a pointed tip and no serration.



Native Spiny Headed Mat Rush



Weed Wild Iris

DISTINCTIVE FEATURES

A distinguishing feature of *Lomandra longifolia* is its leaf tip. It has a prominent tooth or serration that is common to many *Lomandra* species.

Lomandra is commonly used in roadside plantings around Sydney. *Diets* is not

a particularly invasive plant. Its seed head is very different to the Mat Rush.

The leaves are shinier and slightly thinner with a pointed tip and no serration.

WEED REMOVAL

The *Diets* is fairly easy to remove. Pull out any smaller *Diets* by hand (check the tip if unsure. If there is no tooth and a flat base, it is the weed) and any larger clumps can be dug out with mattock. If this weed is not spreading vigorously and is providing habitat for small birds or lizards alternative control might be to simply collect and bag its seed head after it flowers. *Diets* will re-shoot from any root stock left in the soil. It also produces abundant seed which can remain viable in the soil for an extended period of time.



BARBED WIRE GRASS AND COOLATAI GRASS

NATIVE

- Name** Barbed-wire grass
(*Cymbopogon refractus*)
- Habit** Perennial tufted grass with tall wiry stems to 1m high.
- Habitat** Woodland areas on sandstone. Found in most parts of NSW, Qld, Vic and NT.
- Leaves** Green and about 30cm long.
- Flowers** Its inflorescence resembles the barbs of barbed wire. This is due to the racemes which point downwards on maturity. Flowers mostly spring-autumn.
- Fruit/Seed** Dry, one seeded.

WEED

- Name** Coolatai Grass (*Hyparrhenia hirta*)
- Habit** Dense tussock to 150cm tall.
- Habitat** Found in Hornsby Shire, along the northern NSW coast and Western Australia and grows along roadsides and in pastures.
- Leaves** Greyish-green leaves that turn orangey-red in winter. Harsh to touch.
- Flowers** Flowers year round. Has 5-13 awned spikelets with whitish hairs.
- Fruit/seed** Has tall seed heads with paired racemes. Leafy bracts are a rusty brown colour.
- Origin** Africa and the Mediterranean

DISTINCTIVE FEATURES

Barbed wire grass has aromatic foliage. The leaves when crushed are lemon scented. It is interesting to know that the commonly used cooking herb, Lemon Grass (*Cymbopogon citratus*) and other *Cymbopogon* sp. all have a lemon scent to them. It is very difficult to distinguish Coolatai grass from the native grass except that it has no distinct smell when crushed and the spikelets are often paired.

WEED REMOVAL



Native Barbed Wire Grass



Weed Coolatai Grass





Native Saw Sedge



Weed Pampas Grass

SAW SEDGE AND PAMPAS GRASS

NATIVE

- Name** Saw Sedge (*Gahnia sp.*)
- Family** Cyperaceae
- Habit** Grows to 2.5 metres.
- Habitat** Sedge found in a wide range of areas. Some species grow on creek edges, in swamp pockets of forests and some prefer salty soils.
- Leaves** Glossy green, linear to drooping and have small serrations along them as described in their name.
- Flowers** High flowering spikes that produce small nuts (1.5-5.5mm) which are red/brown. It flowers between spring and summer. Flowers are insignificant.

- Fruit/Seed** A nut of between 2.5-6mm and variously straw, brown, black or red in colour depending on the species.

WEED

- Name** Pampas Grass (*Cortaderia selloana*)
- Family** Poaceae
- Habit** Dense tussocky perennial grass that can grow up to 3 metres.
- Habitat** Grows across a wide variety of environments with a preference for sunny open conditions, although grows well in moist areas and can be found along rivers and drainage lines and in disturbed heathland.
- Leaves** The leaves, like the *Gahnia*, have silica serrations which are bluish green in colour. Often the leaves die off and curl around the base looking like wood shavings.
- Flowers** Has a flower spike up to 4 m high. This flower spike has a large white or pinkish silky plume up to one metre long. Flowers in Autumn.
- Fruit/seed** Produces copious seed.
- Origin:** South America

DISTINCTIVE FEATURES

The Gahnias can often be confused with Pampas Grass, however some noticeable differences set them apart. Pampas grass generally has a greyish appearance. *Gahnia* has a dark coloured nut and pampas grass has a fluffy seed head that is wind dispersed. Pampas grass has an accumulation of dead foliage at its base where *Gahnia* does not.

WEED REMOVAL

Pampas Grass can be hand removed as a seedling but as an adult, especially over 3m tall, requires other methods. All seed heads should be bagged for disposal. Safety must also be considered when removing this weed. The silica in the serrated edges can cut deep: gloves and goggles must be worn for protection. Long sleeves and long trousers are also highly recommended. When cutting pampas the silica can form a dust. A dust mask is useful to protect from inhalation and accidental ingestion.



BLUE FLAX LILY AND SPIDER PLANT

NATIVE

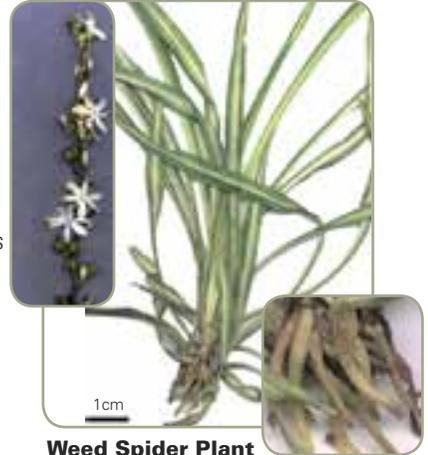
- Name** Blue Flax Lily (*Dianella caerulea*)
- Family** Liliaceae
- Habit** Is a native tufted herb to 50 cm tall
- Habitat** Found in woodland and sandstone plant communities. It prefers fertile soils in well shaded areas.
- Leaves** Dark green strapped leaves which have small serrations can be felt along each edge. The leaves are sheathed at the base and attached to a small stalk.
- Flowers** Flowers in spring and has a long flower spike with small blue flowers.
- Fruit/Seed** Flowers turn into purple/blue berries. These are edible when ripe (purple).



Native Flax Lily

WEED

- Name** Spider Plant (*Chlorophytum comosum*)
- Family** Liliaceae
- Habit** A tufted perennial herb to 60cm high
- Habitat** A garden escape tolerant of drought conditions.
- Leaves** Some varieties of Spider Plant are variegated (have white stripes up the leaves) or have pale green leaves. The leaves are thick and the roots are bulbous and used to store water.
- Flowers** Flowers in summer and has small white flowers on its stalks.
- Fruit/seed** Produces an angular seed capsule.
- Origin** South Africa



Weed Spider Plant

DISTINCTIVE FEATURES

Spider plant can grow in a variety of conditions and spreads by seed and by vegetative parts. It has no serrations on its leaf edge, and the leaves can often elongate to produce a new plant from the tip (plantlet) that will root and detach from the original adult plant. The flowers and fruit of *Dianella caerulea* are often deformed by thrips.

WEED REMOVAL

Spider plant can be dug out and left to dry out upside down on raft system to avoid root parts touching the soil. Be aware that after removal, especially of a large patch, dense germination of the weed can occur. Bulbous roots need not be removed.



SPINY HEADED MAT RUSH AND *LOMANDRA HYSTRIX*

NATIVE

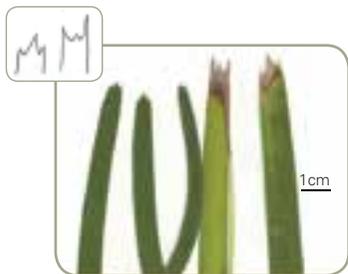
- Name** Spiny Headed Mat Rush (*Lomandra longifolia*)
- Family** Lomandraceae
- Habit** Tufted, grass-like herb. Grows 50-100cm tall.
- Habitat** Common and grows in a wide range of habitats.
- Leaves** Wide strap-like leaves usually around 50 cm long, which are distinguishable by their hairless, conspicuous marginal sclerenchyma bands. The leaf apex or tip of this native is 2 or 3 toothed, with the central tooth pronounced. There are a few different forms of the teeth and these are generally orange brown or reddish brown.

Flowers The flower spike of *L. longifolia* stands shorter than the leaf blades reaching maximum 15cm long. The flower clusters are whorled up the prickly, branched inflorescence and appear yellow or cream. They have male and female plants distinguished by their flowers. The male flowers are shorter at 3.5mm, where the female are around 4.5mm long. Flowers in spring only.

Fruit/Seed Seeds like wheat grains and easy to propagate.

WEED

- Name** *Lomandra hystrix*
- Family** Lomandraceae
- Habit** Grows from 90 to 150cm tall.
- Habitat** Grows in a variety of habitats. Found along streams and on sandy soils north from Taree in NSW.
- Leaves** Leaf blades are quite thin, a bright green, flat and wide and with a toothed tip. The tooth is acutely pointed and mostly white in colour (occasionally brown to reddish brown).
- Flowers** Male and female flowers are very similar and both inflorescences will grow as tall as the leaf blades. The inflorescence is branched only twice and is flattened with whorled flower clusters. Male and female flower sizes are the same as *L. longifolia* and are yellow or cream. Flowers in spring and summer.
- Origin** Australia. Only found north of Taree into Queensland. This plant has made its way into more southern areas due to the commercialisation as a hardy garden plant.



Native Spiny Headed Mat Rush



Weed *Lomandra hystrix*

DISTINCTIVE FEATURES

Unlike *Lomandra longifolia*, *L. hystrix* flowers in summer as well as spring. The flowers of *L. hystrix* are far more loosely and openly branched than those of *L. longifolia*. *L. hystrix* leaves also lack conspicuous marginal bands on the leaves, and have a different different tip shape. *L. hystrix* does not seed as readily as *L. longifolia*. *Lomandra longifolia* has relatively thick leaf blades, and Aboriginal people used them to weave baskets. The white base of the leaf was also eaten.

WEED REMOVAL



SEA RUSH AND SPINY RUSH

NATIVE

- Name** Sea Rush (*Juncus kraussii*)
Family Juncaceae
Habit Grows between 1-2 m tall, and has a tall and open appearance.
Habitat Grows in brackish waters/ coastal areas.
Leaves Dark green, 1.5m long.
Flowers Flowers spring to summer. Purplish brown flowers clusters on spikes.
Fruit/seed Shiny dark brown capsules.



Native Sea Rush

WEED

- Name** Spiny rush (*Juncus acutus*)
Family Juncaceae
Habit As the name suggests is a very spiky sedge. Has a characteristic globe shape to it, and can grow up to 1.6m tall.
Habitat Grows along brackish or coastal areas.
Leaves Stem-like, pith filled leaves.
Flowers Flowers spring to summer.
Fruit/seed Three celled brown capsule.
Origin Europe, Africa and North America



Weed Spiny Rush

DISTINCTIVE FEATURES

Looks similar to the Common Rush (*Juncus usitatus*) that grows in creeklines and fresh water/moist areas. The Sea Rush has more open stems, and often appears brown due to the dying leaves within its tufts. *Juncus acutus* is easily distinguished by its extremely sharp spiny leaf tips and its pith filled stems and leaves.

WEED REMOVAL

Spiny rush has invaded many significant wetland/salt marsh areas, and is particularly difficult to remove and control, because of its spiny nature, and the locations it inhabits. It can be matted out, but great care should be taken to avoid injury from the spiny tips. An alternative removal technique is to slash and then spray new growth with glyphosate (when tides are low to avoid water contamination). It is preferable to spray during warmer months.





Native Saltwater Couch



Weed Common Couch

DISTINCTIVE FEATURES

Common couch leaves are a lot shorter than those of Saltwater Couch. It grows readily from seed and runners/dumped plants, as it roots readily from the stems.

WEED REMOVAL

Common Couch can be difficult to remove once it is established. If recently dumped, contain quickly and dispose of it via green waste bin. Dispose of any soil as well. Spraying can be effective but it will readily return. Stem scraping small sparse infestations can be very effective if root system not available due to depth or rocky. Couch can be important habitat for a range of lizards and frogs, so often preventing it from spreading further into good bush can be more valuable than attempting complete removal.



SALTWATER COUCH AND COMMON COUCH

NATIVE

- Name** Saltwater Couch
(*Sporobolous virginicus*)
- Family** Poaceae
- Habit** Perennial creeping grass that grows in coastal areas, often in thickets. It spreads using underground runners and by seed.
- Habitat** Often grows in sandy soils.
- Leaves** Erect and greyish green in colour. The grass blades can reach up to 50cm tall.
- Flowers** Flowers spring-summer
- Fruit/seed** Spikelet with two unequal glumes (dry leaves).

WEED

- Name** Common Couch (*Cynodon dactylon*)
- Family** Poaceae
- Habit** Rhizotomous and stoloniferous, mat forming grass to 30cm. The runners along which it grows are often quite deep in the soil making it difficult to remove by hand without a lot of disturbance to surrounding native plants and the soil itself.
- Habitat** Found in areas with disturbed soils, where there has been dumping and often is used for lawns.
- Leaves** 2-15cm long with a ligule.
- Flowers** Flowers in summer.
- Fruit/Seed** Has an awned seed head.
- Origin:** Origin Southern Europe, Africa, Asia and Australia