

Hunter Region Priority Weed

Coolatai grass

If you don't have it, you don't want it



Management guide



In NSW, weeds are regulated by the *NSW Biosecurity Act, 2015*. All land managers have a **General Biosecurity Duty** to contain the spread of weeds.

“General Biosecurity Duty means that any person dealing with plant matter must take measures to prevent, minimise or eliminate the biosecurity risk (as far as is reasonably practicable).”

The Regional priority for Coolatai grass is to protect assets from the weed’s impacts. In order to achieve this

Land Managers are asked to:

Mitigate the risk of new weeds being introduced to their land. Land managers should mitigate spread from their land. The plant should not be bought, sold, grown, carried or released into the environment.

For further information contact your local Biosecurity (Weeds) Officer via [Hunter Regional Weeds](#) or [visit NSW WeedWise](#)

Impacts

Coolatai grass is an invasive drought, fire and herbicide tolerant tussock forming perennial grass.

- It readily invades pastures and dominates them, particularly where ground cover is low due to overgrazing or low fertility.
- It easily invades disturbed roadsides.
- It invades relatively pristine remnant native vegetation making it a significant threat to the natural biodiversity in stock routes, nature reserves and National Parks.

- The maintenance of a legume component in a Coolatai grass dominated pasture is difficult.
- Forms monocultures, out-competing most other species.
- Plants are long lived.
- Established plants are tolerant of drought, fire and herbicides.
- It is able to produce fertile seed from a single plant.
- Seed will germinate over a wide range of temperatures.
- Seeds are able to germinate and establish at the soil surface in the presence of leaf litter.

- Easily spread by stock, machinery, fodder and seed. Seed is small, lightweight and mobile:
 - wind - seed can easily be spread by air movement from passing vehicles, particularly trucks.
 - water
 - animals – grazing stock may carry seed on their coats or in their gut
 - vehicles - the seed is carried on machinery used for roadside slashing

Management

The general public and land managers need to know that Coolatai grass is an invasive undesirable species and new occurrences must be correctly identified and controlled.

- In any management program, infestations should be mapped and early efforts directed at lightly infested areas, working back toward more heavily infested areas.
- Cropping for 2 - 3 years will control Coolatai grass.
- Establish and maintain a competitive pasture.
- Rotational grazing is also important to maintain soil health and ground cover of desirable pasture diversity.
- Maintaining adequate levels of soil nutrients.
- Land managers must ensure stock, fodder, grain and machinery coming onto their land has not come from an infested area.
- Stock should be quarantined in a small paddock for at least a week. Monitor this paddock for Coolatai grass establishment for the next 2 summers.
- Stock grazed on Coolatai grass during flowering and seed set should not be moved to ‘clean’ paddocks without some quarantine period.
- Coolatai grass is tolerant of most commonly used herbicides. Up to three applications of glyphosate in the same growing season will be required.
- Pre-treatments of burning and slashing can reduce control effectiveness.
- Hand-pull, bag and burn newly discovered plants on driveways/roadsides.

Identification



Correct identification is key. Two other related species are found in NSW. There are also several different native grasses which are often confused with Coolatai grass. *Photo: P Sykes*



Paired racemes of Coolatai grass are a key distinguishing feature.

Photo: J Hosking

Photo: B Verbeek



Tolerant of a wide range of soil types and is very drought tolerant, it is found on roadsides where it is often abundant. *Photo: H Rose*



Also found in other disturbed, often compacted low fertility areas.

Photo: H Rose



Coolatai grass dominated pasture Inverell district of NSW. *Photo: B Verbeek*



Coolatai grass seed heads. *Photo: H Rose*

Management Calendar

The calendar below outlines the management approach for a typical year.

| Month | Jan | Feb | Mar | Apr | May | Jun | Jul | Aug | Sep | Oct | Nov | Dec |
|--------------|--|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|---|---|-----|-----|
| Growth stage | Optimum time for germination with soil temperature 20-30°C | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Flowering and seed setting, although can flower all year in good conditions | | | | | | | | Flowering and seed setting, although can flower all year in good conditions | | | |
| Action | Best time for herbicide control | | | | | | | | | Best time for herbicide control | | |
| | Monitor quarantine paddocks – 2 years Monitor roadsides and driveways for emerging plants – hand pull, bag and burn new plants Practise good pasture management - rotational grazing | | | | | | | | | Slashing/burning for pasture management | | |

Recommended control options may vary according to your area. There are experienced professional Biosecurity (Weeds) Officers based in each Local Government Area who have local knowledge and can provide expert advice for your weed management situation. Contact your expert Biosecurity (Weeds) Officer at your local Council or at **Hunter Regional Weeds**.

Herbicide control options for all areas in NSW, including current herbicide registrations, are available for Coolatai grass at **NSW WeedWise**.

Remember that all herbicide must be used and handled in accordance with the label or permit.

<https://weeds.dpi.nsw.gov.au/Weeds/CoolataiGrass>



Get the WeedWise app

Further information

For further information on how to meet your General Biosecurity Duty on your property, your best source is the expert Weeds Officer at your local Council or via Hunter Regional Weeds.

Contact Hunter Regional Weeds

www.hunterregionalweeds.net.au

Hunter Local Land Services

www.lls.nsw.gov.au/regions/hunter

NSW Weed Wise

www.weeds.dpi.nsw.gov.au

