

African lovegrass

Eragrostis curvula

Family

Poaceae (grass)

Also known as

Weeping lovegrass, Boer lovegrass, fyngrass, *Poa curvula*

Where is it originally from?

Africa

What does it look like?

Variable, densely tufted, tussock-like, erect or prostrate perennial grass (<1.5 m tall) with fibrous roots (<50 cm deep) that is deciduous in cold areas. Narrow, rough, bright green to blue-green (blushes bronze-red after hard frost) hair-like leaves (3-7mm wide) are rolled inwards, and usually curly at tips. Seedheads with blackish, olive purplish seeds, ripening to greyish in summer, are usually loose, airy hanging clusters (<30 cm x <20 cm), on arching stems (<1 m long). Several varieties occur in New Zealand, and harshness and palatability to animals varies widely.

Are there any similar species?

This is the only grass with blackish seeds and curly leaf tips.

Why is it weedy?

Long-lived, fast growing and maturing. Produces massive numbers of highly viable, well-dispersed seeds that germinate spring and autumn. Tolerates fire, disturbance, hot temperatures to hard frost, poor and acidic soils, and while intolerant of wet soil, grows rapidly through droughts.

How does it spread?

Seeds are spread in wind, and on vehicles, stock and people. Reseeds prolifically after fire, spraying or mechanical disturbance.

What damage does it do?

Rapidly invades bare and disturbed sites and forms dense stands that prevent the establishment of native species.

Which habitats is it likely to invade?

Steep, dry sites, short and tall tussockland, coastal areas, riverbeds, offshore and inshore islands, cliffs, and herbfields, potentially throughout New Zealand.

What can I do to get rid of it?

1. Dig out isolated plants (all year round). Dispose of at refuse transfer station or burn.
2. Spray (spring-summer): glyphosate (15ml/L + penetrant, non-selective) or 520g/L haloxyfop-P-methyl (150ml/10L, selective).

What can I do to stop it coming back?

Difficult to control, repeat treatments every 3 months needed. Minimise disturbance, exclude stock. Densely plant with shade-forming species where appropriate.



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Photo: Trevor James



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