

PLANT PEST CONTROL



LAND PLANT PESTS

Nassella tussock: *Nassella trichotoma*

Why are we worried?

Nassella tussock is a vigorous, extremely invasive tussock grass that is unpalatable to stock. It is well adapted to invade and smother grassland species. Nassella Tussock is usually difficult to recognise and is costly to control and eradicate.

Nassella tussock is designated as a TOTAL CONTROL plant pest throughout the Hawke's Bay region.

This means the land occupier must destroy all Nassella tussock plants before the production of hard seed.

For details please refer to the Regional Plant Pest and Animal Pest Management Strategy, or consult with your Biosecurity Plant Pest Officer at Hawke's Bay Regional Council.

What does it look like?

- Nassella tussock is a perennial tussock grass with dense, fibrous, tough roots. It grows up to 0.5m high and 1m wide.
- The roots have a shallot-like swollen stem just above ground level.
- The leaves on young plants are erect, but older plants have drooping foliage, which is narrow, wiry and rough to touch when you draw your fingers from leaf tip to the base.
- Flowers and seeds are purple, making Nassella tussock easy to recognise when it flowers from November to December. The flower heads are in open branched panicles (which droop



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when mature. Mature seeds are wind borne.

Where is it found?

Nassella tussock will grow in a wide range of habitats throughout New Zealand, particularly on steep, rugged, sunny slopes, dry spurs and knobs, stony riverbeds, streambanks and terraces.

It is currently found in two sites in Hawke's Bay in the Tangoio and Lower Tukituki valleys. In both areas intensive control measures over 20 years have not totally eradicated the Nassella tussock yet. Each year young plants are found and grubbed out.

How does it spread?

Mature seed stems are spread by the wind and carried by livestock and machinery. Livestock and machinery movements on infested areas must be restricted during seeding to minimise the risk of spread.

What's the best way to control this plant pest?

If you suspect that you have Nassella tussock on your property contact your Biosecurity Plant Pest Officer who will help you to identify the plant and assist with control advice.

The aim of all the control methods is to prevent plants from producing seed.

Chemical control

Spraying with Dalapon or glyphosate is usually only done on densely infested areas.

Apply all herbicides according to their label. Consult your Hawke's Bay Regional Council Biosecurity Plant Pest Officer or agrichemical supplier for the current herbicide recommendations.

Physical control

Known and suspected sites should be inspected at least twice a year. Walk the area grubbing plants out.

Biological control

At present there are no biological control

agents

For further information

For further information on plant pests ask for other titles in this series or contact Biosecurity Plant Pest Officers at the Hawke's Bay Regional Council for advice.

Wairoa	06 838 8527
Napier	06 835 9200
Waipukurau	06 858 8636
TOLL FREE	0800 108 838
www.hbrc.govt.nz	

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