

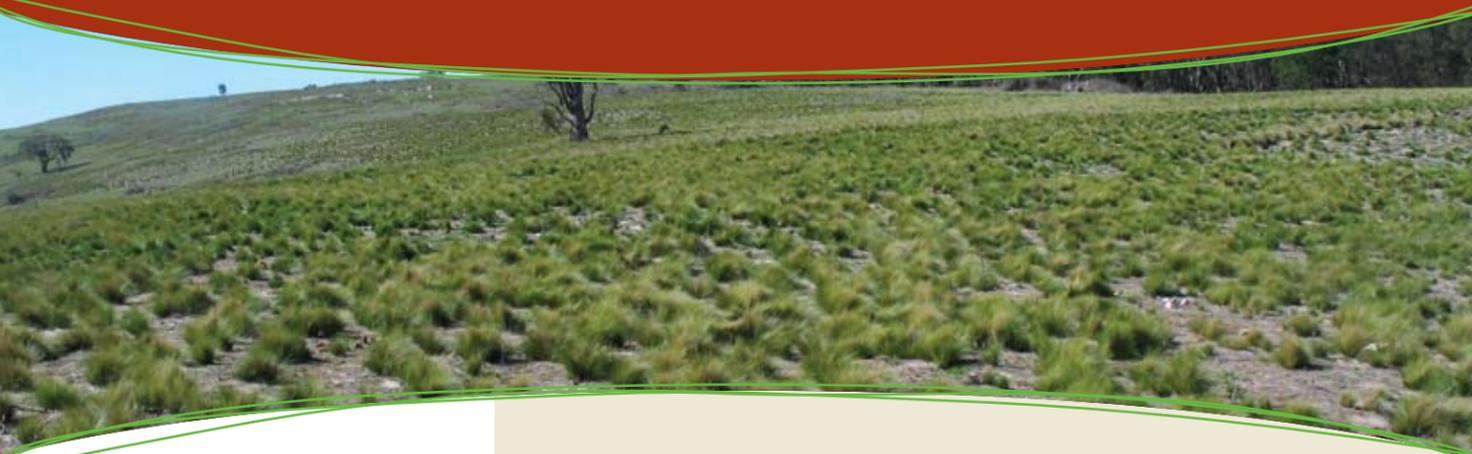


## LEARN TO RECOGNISE SERRATED TUSSOCK GET ON TOP OF INFESTATIONS AND DON'T LET IT SEED

## MANAGING WEEDS ON THE FAR SOUTH COAST OF NSW



# Serrated Tussock



This guide has been compiled by the Southern Rivers CMA with assistance from the Bega Valley Shire Council, Eurobodalla Shire Council, Dr Bill Johnston and the Farming For Weeds Suppression Project Steering Group August 2011.



Funded by:



Australian Government

### For further information phone:

Bega Valley Shire Weed Officers: 02 6499 2222  
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### Refer to:

Serrated Tussock National Best Practice Management Manual  
<http://www.weeds.org.au/WoNS/serratedtussock/docs/stbpmm.pdf>

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## Management Tips

- Seek and destroy all isolated plants. Record where plants have seeded and chase up daughter plants continually before they mature and set seed.
  - Serrated tussock can be controlled all year round. The best time to control individual plants is when you find them.
  - Adopt grazing practices and systems which allow pastures to be rested, thereby maintaining groundcover and increasing the competition from desirable species.
  - If controlling serrated tussock by hand - chip out, expose roots and remove individual plants – avoid leaving any bare ground for seedling germination.
  - Careful and strategic use of an approved herbicide can provide good control. For spot spraying individual plants, use Glyphosate 360 (10ml/L) or Flupropanate. Take care that you don't overspray and create bare ground around the tussock.
  - If using herbicides on dense infestations or across large areas, have a follow-up plan for establishing a competitive pasture. Seek advice from you agronomist or Council Weeds Officer.
- Follow all regulations and guidelines for using and storing herbicides.\***

## Identification Tips

**Serrated tussock can be confused with native Poa tussocks or Spear grasses, which grow mainly during the cooler months of the year.**

- Check out tussock grasses that are not normally grazed - they may be serrated tussock.
- Serrated tussock does not retain its seed heads – they are blown by the wind. Spear grasses usually retain some seed-stems through summer.
- Serrated tussock leaves are fine, parallel and needle-like. Leaves roll smoothly between the thumb and finger. Native tussock leaves are wider at the base (up to 5mm) and feel like they have edges when rolled between the fingers.
- Serrated tussock leaves cannot be unrolled. They are completely hairless and white at the base. Look for the ligule at the leaf junction (refer to photo 4).
- Serrated tussock maintains its spiky, often blonde appearance for most of the year. Native tussocks tend to remain green for much of the year.
- When identifying serrated tussock, check all distinguishing features. If you are unsure seek advice from your Shire Weed Officer or local agronomist.



Serrated tussock is a "Weed of National Significance", and the worst perennial grass weed in Australia. Dense infestations can reduce pasture productivity by up to 95% and are costly to eradicate.



Often difficult to identify from other tussock plants, it is recognised by its purple to mauve flower heads in early summer; the blonde appearance of plants in late summer and through winter; its needle-like leaves that cannot be 'unrolled', and the fine serrations felt by rubbing leaves from tip to base.



Windborne seed of serrated tussock can travel many kilometres and therefore it is a major weed threat in South Coast districts.



Serrated tussock is an extremely unpalatable, robust plant, which can live for more than 20 years. Control depends on the persistent destruction of all plants and maintenance of ground cover and pasture vigour.

## Serrated Tussock Facts

### Working against you

- Seed heads are easily moved by the wind and can be spread over large areas.
- Spreads through insidious encroachment by "daughter" plants germinating near older tussocks.
- Establishes in a 'shot-gun' manner with an initial scattering of daughter plants, rather than single patches.
- Once established, plants are tenacious and can be difficult to pull out.
- Extremely low palatability & feed quality (especially to sheep).
- Difficult to identify plants less than 1-2 years old, by which time they have probably seeded.
- Can easily be mistaken as a tussocky native grass.
- Plants may be grazed in autumn making them difficult to spot.
- Seed may germinate up to 14 years later and can pass through animals unharmed.

### Working for you

- Seedlings are numerous, but weak and not competitive when establishing.
- Establishes with difficulty and slowly in well managed, vigorous pastures.
- Livestock avoid grazing tussocks, which over time can make them more visible and easier to identify.
- Can be effectively controlled throughout the year.
- **With persistence and good management, serrated tussock is readily controllable. Many landholders have successfully controlled extensive infestations.**

### Legal Obligations

Serrated Tussock is a listed noxious weed and must be controlled as required under the Noxious Weeds Act 1993.



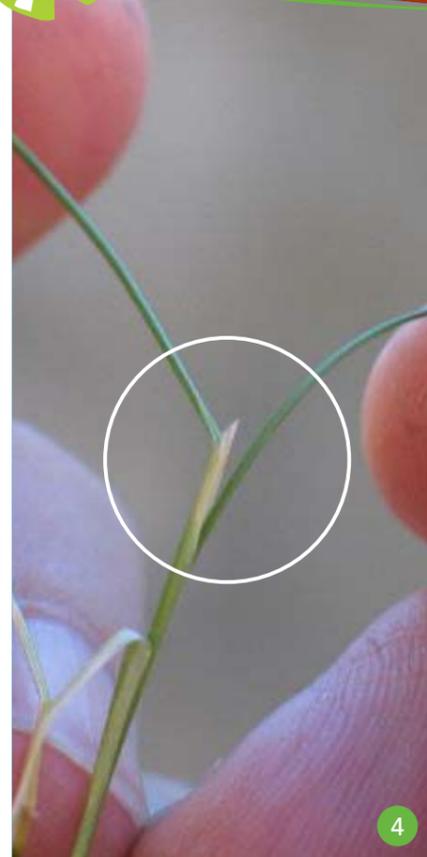
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## Identifying Serrated Tussock

### Management Calendar

TARGET	BE VIGILANT - Learn what serrated tussock looks like and keep an eye out for it. Control established plants before they can set seed.											
	Maintain > 80% ground cover to increase competition and therefore minimise seedling establishment.											
PLANT STAGE	Serrated tussock germination can occur at any time of the year, depending on conditions.											
	Plants have finished seeding and seedheads are being blown on the wind. Plants are erect and spikey, with a mixture of green and dead, yellow-coloured leaves.			Plants are actively growing. Leaves are tightly rolled and dullish olive-green in colour.			Plants are developing into spreading tussocks with a high proportion of dead leaves and blonde leaf-tips. Mature plants can increasingly take on this distinctive blonde appearance up to mid-spring. This is especially true in areas that receive frosts.			Plants are actively growing and start to set seed from late October. Purple-tinged seed heads mature in late spring.		Plants are actively growing and setting seed.
MONTH	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
ACTION	Keep a look out for seedlings. Encourage the growth of summer growing perennial grasses such as kikuyu and native grasses.			Destroy older plants in autumn and winter to prevent them from seeding. Keep a look out for seedlings. Time to sow sub-clover and cool season grasses into pastures.					Focus on the control of mature plants - aim for total eradication. Maintain vigilance for seedlings as well - be aware they can be difficult to identify during these months. Encourage the growth of summer growing perennial grasses such as kikuyu and native grasses.			
	Introduce a grazing management system that does not overgraze desirable pasture species and allows paddocks to be rested. Reducing the size of paddocks can aid in managing grazing pressure better.											



- Serrated tussock characteristically contains a proportion of dead, straw coloured leaves mixed in with light to bright green leaves. This gives plants a blonde appearance which is more evident in winter months.
- A non-flowering juvenile serrated tussock plant in late summer. Note the contrast between the bright green leaves and the older, straw coloured leaves. Serrations can be felt by rubbing the leaves from tip to base.
- Purple seeds first appear in mid-spring within the foliage of the tussock.
- The ligule is a small flap of tissue which is located at the junction of each leaf blade and the stem from which it arises. In serrated tussock the ligule is a small white flap about 1mm long, which can be seen sticking up at the leaf junction when the leaf blade is pulled back away from the stem. In the most similar looking native tussocks the ligule is not visible to the naked eye.
- The bases of serrated tussock leaves are distinctly white. In many native tussocks and grasses, these leaf bases may have a purple or pink tinge.
- The purple to mauve tinged seed heads are not erect - they are long and wispy and tend to blow over in the wind.
- It can be difficult to distinguish serrated tussock from native Poa grasses. If you are unsure seek advice.