

Control and Management

As with most invasive species, the early detection and management is crucial in the control of African Lovegrass. Most grass weeds are difficult to identify because they look innocuous and rarely raise land managers' attention until the species is well established. This is the case for African Lovegrass.

The key steps to controlling African Lovegrass are:

- **Learn** to identify African Lovegrass, or seek assistance in identification
- Seek assistance to **Planning** control methods
- **Implement** the control methods as planned and monitor for regeneration.



African Lovegrass

Herbicide Options

Glyphosate 360 g/L (Various products)

Rate: 1.0 L per 100 L of water **Spot spray**, or 6.0 L per 100 L of water **Boom** application.

Comments: Apply to actively growing plants in Spring and Summer.

Flupropanate 745 g/L (Various products)

Rate: 300 mL per 100 L water **Spot spray**, or 3.0 L per Ha **Boom** application at 150L per Ha water

Comments: Apply in late winter to early summer between July and December.

Whenever using herbicides ALWAYS CHECK THE LABEL for applicable withholding periods.

Acknowledgements

Much of this information was sourced from NSW Weedwise (<https://weeds.dpi.nsw.gov.au/Weeds>)



African Lovegrass

Eragrostis curvula



African Lovegrass infested pasture

Why is African Lovegrass a weed?

African Lovegrass has high seed production, high germination rate and vigorous early growth allowing it to outcompete native grasses and dominate pasture.

Originally introduced to stabilise poor soils, it thrives on low nutrient soils, road and rail reserves and over-grazed or drought affected pasture. African Lovegrass is not particularly palatable and mostly avoided by livestock increasing the grazing pressure on more palatable species. Once established it reduces pasture productivity, it can be difficult to control, requiring herbicide application and strict adherence to management practices.

African Lovegrass is highly flammable and creates a fire hazard and spreads widely after periods of drought or fire have left paddocks bare.

What does it look like?

African Lovegrass is an erect, large perennial tussock grass that grows up to 1m high. Young plants can take on a vase or upright and leaning out shape before being more weeping in habit at maturity.

The leaves are flat and narrow (2-3mm wide) and are a pale and dull greyish green or blue-green, making it distinguishable from the more brilliant green improved pasture species or the waxy green appearance of native grass species. The leaves commonly form a curl at the tip.

The most distinctive feature of African Lovegrass is the black colour of young seeds.

The seed head is open with seed clustered at the end of a spike. The mature seed head looks similar to that of many native panic grasses, such as Hairy panic or Blowaway grass, but typically only half the size.



Flowering African Lovegrass with black seeds

How does it spread

The small, light and pointy seeds are ideal for sticking to clothing, livestock and dirt on vehicles. The tall open seed heads also allow for seeds to be shed when blown in the wind or by passing vehicles on roadsides. Seeds are easily moved by rainwater and river flows.

Each seed head can produce up to 1000 seeds each. African Lovegrass seeds have a high percentage of germination and viability in the soil. After 5 years more than half the seed in the soil is still viable. Seeds can remain viable for up to 17 years, meaning long term management is essential.



African Lovegrass

African lovegrass seeds are small and hard. This allows the seeds to pass through livestock after being eaten and still remain viable, aiding the wider spread from droppings of grazing stock.