

WEED OF THE MONTH

WANTED: THATCH GRASS

Have you seen thatch grass growing on roadsides, along your fence lines or in paddocks? Thatch grass (*Hyparrhenia rufra*) is a tropical pasture grass originated from Africa. The grass in many cases has been naturalised and spread beyond the original plantings.



Thatch grass is most common in coastal areas of Northern Queensland, with the capability of outcompeting native grasses due to its higher germination potential and fast seeding growth.

Dominating the understory the thatch replaces native vegetation, which adds to the fuel load, frequency, intensity and size of future fires. The seeds are spread through there

long bristles that are capable of easily spreading by animals or people as they walk past the plant. After a fire it is in perfect condition for the seed to germinate as well as spreading with assistance of the wind.

Identifying thatch grass can be difficult as it is similar to many different native grass species, however here are a few tips to show you the difference:

- Erect, densely tufted perennial grass can grow up to 3m tall.
- The stalks are smooth with forked flower stalks. Each branch of the fork can grow to 4.4cm long.
- The smooth, flat leaves can grow to 60cm long and 0.8cm wide. The leaf – sheaths are wider than the blade at the collar base
- Flowers are covered in rusty brown hairs
- Seed heads are tall with brown bristles that are 2cm long with two bends.

Please help us to target this invasive plant for early detection and eradication.

USEFUL CONTACTS

Online

- www.qld.gov.au/environment/plants-animals/plants/herbarium/identify-specimens
- www.denr.nt.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0005/258017/wra-report-thatch-grass-updated-logo.pdf

If you are unsure whether you have found thatch grass, or if you find another plant you want to be identified, send a sample to the Queensland Herbarium for identification. This is a free service, and instructions on how to collect and send a sample can be found at the Queensland Herbarium's website (listed above).

If your sample is thatch grass or another weed, contact Council's Biosecurity Services team for treatment or management plans.