

WEED FILE: Pampas

REVISED: DEC 2024



Pampas Grass – *Cortaderia selloana*
Purple Pampas Grass – *Cortaderia jubata*

DESCRIPTION

Note: The two introduced pampas grass pest species (above) are often confused with the native plant toetoe, also Cortaderia species, of which there are four varieties. An identification guide appears below.

Pampas grass is banned nationally from being sold, propagated or distributed. It's an invasive plant that forms dense stands of up to 5 metres high (pampas grass) or 3 metres (purple pampas).

The plant is actually a perennial giant grass species, and forms thick tussock-like clumps. The leaves are long and slender and grow from the base. They are up to 2 metres long and 30-35mm wide, and have serrated cutting edges in both the pampas species. Rising above these are the flowers, appearing on long stalks as feathery flags that extend the height of the flowering plant considerably.

Pampas grass flowers from March to May, and the flower heads are generally white, sometimes pinkish or light purple,

Purple pampas flowers earlier; generally January to March. The flower heads are purple and fade to dull brown as they mature and produce particularly large amounts of seed.

In addition to the fire and vermin hazards that pampas stands represent, and their invasive effect on natural habitats, the seeds of the pampas are a serious problem if kiwifruit is grown nearby, sticking to the furry fruit skin and reducing its value considerable.

The roots of both pampas species are fibrous and dense, extending to 3 metres or more. This makes control by grubbing out very difficult in established stands.

Identifying Pampas vs Toetoe

- Flowering Timing: Toetoe generally flowers earlier; October to January, pampas from Mar-May.
- Leaf Veins: Toetoe leaves have fine veins appearing on the leaves between the mid-rib and the margin of the leaf; pampas do not.
- Leaf Base: Pampas leaves often have curled woody shavings (leaf litter) at the base, while Toetoe do not.
- Leaf Strength: Pampas leaves are easily snapped off cross-ways, while the toetoe leaf is difficult to break or tear.

HABITAT

Initially planted for shelter, pampas grasses now spread throughout NZ, invading pastures, bush margins, and waste areas.

MANUAL REMOVAL

Smaller and isolated plants can be grubbed or pulled out by hand (wear gloves!). Grazing is not a viable control method because stock will prefer more palatable alternatives (including toetoe).

Chainsawing, slashing and even bulldozing can be effective, although there will be regrowth that will have to be sprayed for control anyway.

HERBICIDE CONTROL

Since pampas is a grass, use a targeted herbicide like Haloxypop (Halox 100 EC) or Glyphosate. To protect nearby plants, shield them from spray drift or use Halox 100 EC, which is safer around trees and natives (except native grasses).

Spray late spring to autumn for best results.

Boom Spray Application

- Halox 100 EC at 7.5L/ha, or
- Glyphosate 360 at 9L/ha, or
- Glyphosate 540 at 6L/ha, or
- Granny soluble granular glyphosate at 4kg/ha

In all cases add 200ml of SprayWetter or SuperWetter penetrant per 100L.

Spray Application

Knapsack:

- Halox 100 EC at 150ml/10L water in a knapsack sprayer, or
- Glyphosate 360 at 150ml/10L, or
- Glyphosate 540 at 100ml/10L, or
- Granny soluble granular glyphosate at 70g/10L.

In all cases add 20ml of SprayWetter or SuperWetter penetrant per 10L.

Handgun Sprayer:

- Halox 100 EC at 500ml/100L, or
- Glyphosate 360 at 1L/100L, or
- Glyphosate 540 at 660ml/100L, or
- Granny soluble granular glyphosate at 450g/100L.

In all cases add 200ml of SprayWetter or SuperWetter penetrant per 100L.

Weed Wiping:

If the Pampas is taller than surrounding grasses weed wiping may be an option.

- Glyphosate 360 at 200ml/L of water, or
- Glyphosate 540 at 130ml/L, or
- Granny soluble granular glyphosate at 90g/1L.

In all cases add 2ml/L of either SprayWetter or SuperWetter.

ALL SPRAY RECOMMENDATIONS WILL ALSO KILL PASTURE GRASSES.

