GLOBAL INVASIVE SPECIES DATABASE

FULL ACCOUNT FOR: ***Nassella tenuissima***

Nassella tenuissima 简体中文 正體中文

System: Terrestrial

Kingdom	Phylum	Class	Order	Family
Plantae	Magnoliophyta	Liliopsida	Cyperales	Poaceae

Common name
Texas tussock grass (English), elegant spear grass (English, Australia), Texas tussock (English), ponytail grass (English), fine-stemmed needle grass (English), white tussock (English), angel's hair (English, Australia), pony tail (English, Australia), Mexican needle grass (English), Mexican feather grass (English)

Synonym
Stipa tenuissima , Trin.
Stipa cirrosa , E. Fourn.
Stipa subulata , E. Fourn.
Stipa oreophila , Speg.
Stipa tenuissima , var. *oreophila* (Speg.) Speg.
Stipa tenuissima , var. *planicola* Speg.

Similar species
Nassella spp.

Summary
Nassella tenuissima)commonly known as Mexican feather grass) can be a weed in its native range at sites under high disturbance, such as that caused by overgrazing. It forms indigestible balls in the stomach of stock and, if they are forced to graze the infected pasture, they may lose weight and die, as Nassella tenuissima has a high fibre content and a low nutritive value. It is an extremely vigorous, invasive plant, which crowds out desirable pasture species, reducing stock carrying capacity. Nassella tenuissima can also crowd out native grasses in coastal or open areas. It is used for ornamental purposes and is available for sale in nurseries. In recent times, it has been promoted for 'its light and airy nature'.

view this species on IUCN Red List

Species Description
Nassella tenuissima is a graceful, delicate and very fine textured ornamental grass. It grows in a dense fountain like clump with slender, wiry culms 0.3-0.6m tall. The leaves are 15.2-35.6cm long, 0.5mm wide, rolled inward very tightly so that they appear as thin wiry filaments (Christman, 2004). It blooms in late spring with a greenish flower cluster that persists well into fall as it ripens to golden brown (Christman, 2004). Flowers grow in unequal size; a single bisexual floret, which is longer than the floret; flower head, is often only partly exerted and spread from the end (DPI, 2004). Silvery inflorescence between summer to fall and becomes light straw coloured in fall (Evans, 2000). The main body of the seed is 2 to 3mm long DPI (2004). Young seedheads held among the leaves; mature seedhead to 25cm long; glumes to 1cm long; callus bearded (AWC, 2004).

Notes
Australian Quarantine in 1998 permitted the legal import of *Nassella tenuissima* despite all Nassella species are prohibited, because of a slip related to the species synonym. The importer used its old taxonomic name, *Stipa tenuissima*, in the import proposal, which was permitted.

Lifecycle Stages
In La Pampa, Argentina, *Nassella tenuissima* vegetates in autumn, flowers in November and sets seed in December-January (Freda Anderson., pers.comm., 2005).

Uses
In Argentina *Nassella tenuissima* is being used as an ornamental and in some provinces like Tucumán it is used as thatch (F. Anderson, pers. obs.).
Species of a low nutritional value, with a high fibre content which animals do not consume; its abundance indicates degradation of the pasture (de Agrasar *et al* 2005).

Habitat Description
Nassella tenuissima grows on well drained soil and is very drought tolerant (Christman, 2004).

Reproduction
Nassella tenuissima produces thousands of seeds, which are dispersed by wind, water or contaminated soil. Usually propagated from seed and often self sows (Evans, 2000; Christman, 2004).

Management Info
The plant was introduced into Australia and marketed in nurseries under the names “elegant spear grass”, “pony tail” and ”angel's hair”. Education about its negative impacts and the destruction of existent plant specimens in gardens and nurseries could prevent this weed from becoming introduced into new countries or regions in the future.

Pathway
Used as an ornamental and sold in nurseries (AWC, 2004).

Principal source:

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Review: Freda Anderson, Centro de Recursos Naturales Renovables de la Zona Semiárida (CERZOS) - Universidad Nacional del Sur, Bahía Blanca, Argentina.

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ALIEN RANGE

[2] AUSTRALIA
[1] SOUTH AFRICA
[5] NEW ZEALAND

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