

# Pampas Grass (*Cortaderia species*)

## What is it?

Pampas are large, vigorous, dense, tussocky perennial grasses. There are more than 20 species of Pampas grass. Most of these originate in South America, but some are native to New Guinea and New Zealand. Pampas were introduced to Tasmania as shelter belt plants on farms and as ornamentals in parks and gardens. Three of these species have naturalized in Tasmania. They are *Cortaderia selloana* (common pampas grass), *C. jubata* (pink pampas grass) and *C. richardii* (New Zealand pampas, toe toe).



	<i>Cortaderia selloana</i> Common pampas	<i>C. jubata</i> Pink Pampas	<i>C. richardii</i> NZ Pampas
<b>Tussock</b>	2m high. 1 to 1.5m across	1.5 -2m high. 1-1.5m across	To 3m high. 1-1.5m across
<b>Leaf</b>	Many, finely serrated, sharp edged, curving blade to 2m long, tapering, 2-3.5cm wide, distinct midrib top surface (blue-green) paler than undersurface (dark green)	Many, sharp edged curving blade to 2m long, tapering, 2-3 cm wide, distinct midrib, dark green	Many, finely serrated, sharp edged curving to 2m long Distinct midrib and secondary veins 1-2 cm wide blue-green, paler top surface
<b>Leaf sheath</b>	No midrib Smooth or few hairs, not waxy	No midrib Hairy, not waxy	Distinct midrib, waxy white covering
<b>Stems</b>	Multiple long, erect, hollow stems of 2-3cm diameter which reach 2 to 4 m high (occasionally to 6m)	Multiple long, erect, hollow stems of 2-3cm diameter which reach 2 to 4 m high	Multiple long, erect, hollow stems to 2cm diameter which reach 2 to 5 m high
<b>Roots</b>	Massive to 3.5m depth		
<b>Flowers</b>	30 – 90cm long white, pink – mauve produce pale – straw coloured seed	30 – 90cm long purple (fades to brown) produce pale – straw to brown seed	30 – 90cm long, sparse, pale gold produce pale – straw to brown seed
<b>Reproduction</b>	Gynodecious (separate female and bisexual plants). Female plants require cross pollination by bisexual plants.	Plants are female and apomictic (can reproduce without being fertilized)	Female and bisexual plants. Female plants require cross pollination by bisexual plants
<b>Germination</b>	Spring	Spring	Autumn
<b>Flowering</b>	March -May	Jan – mid March Seed already nearly mature before flowering	Nov - Jan

## Key Points

- Prevention is the most cost-effective means of weed control
  - Long-term control of pampas is best achieved by using a combination of control methods.
- Pampas damages native bush & wetlands
- The key to controlling the spread of pampas is to prevent flowering.

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## How it spreads?

Pampas primarily reproduce by seed but can grow from root segments. Seed production is highly prolific with up to 100,000 seeds per flower head. Seeds are light and can be windblown to 25km. An individual plant therefore has a tremendous potential to spread.

## What are its impacts?

Pampas is highly invasive. It is capable of infesting otherwise healthy and intact native vegetation, from clearings in forest to grasslands and wetlands.

Established plants will then out-compete native plants for nutrient, water and light. Over time this means that Pampas plants become bigger, more numerous.

Native plants are threatened as they lose the battle for space and resources and fail to reproduce. The large amount of leaf and stem material produced by pampas plants makes them, additionally, a significant fire hazard.

## Where might it be found in Tasmania?

*Cortaderia selloana* (common pampas grass), *C. jubata* (pink pampas grass) have naturalized across Tasmania including Flinders Island. *C. richardii* (NZ pampas) is confined to the west coast.

## What to do about it?

Stopping seed production is the key to stopping the spread of pampas grass. Site factors will influence the choice of control method. Physical removal is effective. Small plants can be removed manually while machinery will be required for larger, mature plants. There are effective herbicides registered for control of Pampas in Tasmania. A control strategy with both physical and chemical measures can also be effective. Larger plants can be slashed to reduce mass and reduce the amount of herbicide required - ensure seed heads are removed, securely bagged and buried first, though, before spraying. Plants can also be burnt, with care, but will need some new growth prior to herbicide application. Pampas can be controlled through application of a registered herbicide in accordance with label direction.

## Useful links:

The following links may prove useful to the serious weeds enquirer. They contain information about weeds and related issues:

## Statutory Management Plan for Pampas Grass –

<http://www.dpiw.tas.gov.au/inter.nsf/WebPages/LBUN-5DE2AN?open>

## DPIW Useful Weed Resources -

[www.dpiw.tas.gov.au/inter.nsf/WebPages/TPRY-4ZV5H4?open](http://www.dpiw.tas.gov.au/inter.nsf/WebPages/TPRY-4ZV5H4?open)



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