

## No one technique will beat serrated tussock - you need all the tools in your 'tool box' to beat this sinister weed!

***No single technique should be relied on to manage serrated tussock. Serrated tussock is fast becoming a weed every land manager dreads and strikes fear into any farmer or land manager that is familiar with it. Now is the time to put a plan in place for your property!***

Serrated tussock (*Nassella trichotoma*) is one of Australia's worst perennial grass weeds invading pastures, native grasslands and urban areas and is a declared Weed of National Significance in Australia.

"It has the capacity to greatly reduce productivity of grazing lands, impact on biodiversity values and in inaccessible and difficult to manage areas, can be a continuous source of seed for whole regions and communities," says Mitchell Clapham, Chairman of the Serrated Tussock Working Party for NSW and the ACT.

Serrated tussock is widespread across NSW being found from Glen Innes to Eden and from Nowra to Wagga Wagga and Albury and it is still on the move, with recent outbreaks being found near Tumut. It is easily confused with a number of native grasses and often goes unnoticed in both pastures and native grasslands for many years until significant infestations have developed.

"One clear message coming from land managers who have experience in managing serrated tussock is that regardless of the situation or density of the infestation, control programs that only focus on treating the existing serrated tussock plants and on using one method of control may find themselves continually fighting reinvasion," says Clare Hamilton, NSW/ACT Serrated Tussock Coordinator.

"Unfortunately there are no quick fix or one-off solutions. There are however some simple guidelines that will assist in providing long term control:

Prevention - learn to identify serrated tussock and control invasions early, and always aim to prevent plants from flowering and seeding.

Destroy adult plants - this will reduce seeding and avoid adding more seed to the soil seed bank. Your neighbours will also thank you! When using herbicides make sure you rotate those with different modes of action to reduce the chance of resistance.

Out-compete seedlings - competition from desirable pasture species can be highly successful in suppressing the growth of serrated tussock seedlings. Always avoid over grazing and ensure you have good groundcover, not just for weed control but also for healthy soils, plants and animals. Rotational grazing is a great option.

Follow up - follow up, follow up! Serrated tussock control requires a long term commitment. This means going back to treated paddocks every year after the initial treatment and treating any new, small or outlying infestations," says Ms Hamilton.

Using a range of tools to manage and control serrated tussock allows you to target the different stages of the plant's lifecycle and undertake measures that will prevent seeding, reduce weed emergence, promote seed bank depletion and reduce competition with desirable vegetation. It may seem easier to rely on one method or look for a 'quick fix' but in the long term you are causing yourself and your neighbours a disservice.

When choosing control options, it is important to consider the legal requirements in your local area. For example, if serrated tussock must be destroyed, it would be inappropriate to only use options such as spray topping, slashing or burning as these do not kill the plant, only provide temporary relief from annual seed set.

Making a decision about what kind of control measures are required for your situation requires some thought. Your aim should be to reduce serrated tussock density and prevent serrated tussock from seeding. This is likely to require a mixture of techniques depending on your particular situation. Think carefully, plan and consult your local agronomist or Weeds Officer to develop a long term plan.

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The Serrated Tussock Best Practice Manual is also a great source of information and can be obtained free of charge by calling the NSW DPI Bookshop on 1800 028 374.

**For further information** contact Clare Hamilton on 0428 791 359 or Mitchell Clapham 0428 634 585.

### Serrated Tussock Facts

- Serrated tussock has been described as causing a greater reduction of pasture and carrying capacity than any other species in Australia
- Pastures that carry 7 – 15 dse per hectare can be reduced to a carrying capacity of only 0.5dse if heavily infested with serrated tussock
- Serrated tussock covers more than 2 million hectares of land in south-east Australia and has the potential to spread even further with a potential distribution estimated at 32 million hectares across Australia
- Is estimated in NSW that serrated tussock costs more than \$40 million per year in control and lost production and \$5million per year for its control in Victoria
- Serrated tussock invades many of temperate south-eastern Australia's most endangered grassland remnants and its presence is a serious threat to the native flora and fauna of these grasslands
- Serrated tussock aggressively affects agriculture, conservation and urban areas and is a key threat to native grasslands

Serrated tussock is a native of South America. It was thought to be first introduced to Australia in the early 1900's, but was not officially recorded until 1935 at Yass, NSW where it has since expanded its distribution dramatically. Light to dense serrated tussock infestations now occupy over 860,000ha of NSW with scattered infestations over a further 1.2 million ha. The main areas affected by serrated tussock in NSW are the northern, southern and central Tablelands, and Monaro region. *(from Serrated Tussock Best Practice Manual)*

### Images



Mature serrated tussock plant



Serrated tussock can quickly spread throughout an area, rapidly forming a monoculture.



Serrated tussock plant in a pasture situation.



Serrated tussock growing along the roadside.

Additional images are available by contacting Clare Hamilton  
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