African lovegrass (Non Restricted Invasive Weed)  
_Eragrostis curvula_

A native of southern Africa, this grass was probably first introduced to Australia by accident as a contaminant of pasture seed. Different cultivars of this grass have also been used as a soil stabiliser in erosion-control situations.

African lovegrass has been planted in different locations throughout south-east Queensland and has naturalised in all Australian states in acidic, red and especially sandy soils. African lovegrass produces vast quantities of seeds, which quickly develop into a large viable seed bank, making the plant very difficult to eradicate. It is extremely competitive with other pasture species particularly in sandy soils.

African lovegrass can form dense monocultures up to 1.2m high. This can create large fuel loads in the dry months, posing a fire hazard and creating competition with native species regeneration. Invasive plant which can disrupt native flora communities and ecosystems. There are no legal requirements or restrictions on invasive weeds.

Description

African lovegrass is a densely tufted, perennial species that can grow up to 1.2m in height. The plant is generally erect, but stems may bend at the lower nodes—the whole plant often adopts a weeping habit. The narrow leaf blades are of varying lengths and are coloured bright green to blue-green. Leaves are generally hairless, tough to break and have distinct parallel veins. The young flower head may be compact but then spreads, and seed heads can be up to 30cm long. Spikelets and seeds have the typical overlapping herringbone feature of all _Eragrostis_ species. The robust, tufted leaf blades are supported by a fibrous root system contained mostly in the top 50cm of soil. A distinguishing feature of African lovegrass is that the basal sheaths (surrounding its crown at ground level) have very fine silky hairs.

Management

Any physical disturbance of African lovegrass, such as slashing and ploughing, can promote spread and re-infestation. Scattered African lovegrass plants can be chipped out before they flower. Better results will be achieved if chipping out is followed by over-sowing the area. When chipping out the plant, ensure that the tussock crowns are removed, as this will prevent regrowth. If in seed, the stems must be cut and bagged first.