

Mossman river grass

Mossman burr grass

Cenchrus echinatus



Mossman river grass competes for moisture, nutrients and light in tropical and subtropical crops. The burrs can reduce wool value and make shearing hazardous. The spines of burrs penetrate hides decreasing the value.

Declaration details

Mossman river grass is not declared under the *Land Protection (Pest and Stock Route Management) Act 2002*. It is recognised as a problem plant and its removal is encouraged.

Description and general information

Mossman river grass or Mossman burr grass (*Cenchrus echinatus*) is an annual grass with prostrate or erect stems forming loose tufts.

Seedlings are erect, robust, hairless and have bright mid-green leaves. The leaf sheaths are purplish-red, especially in older seedlings.

Mature plants form prostrate or ascending tufts with stout stems up to 90cm, but mostly up to 60 cm.

The leaves are flat and rather stiff, tapering towards the tip. They are 5–25 cm long and 3–12 mm wide.

The ligule (where the leaf blade becomes the leaf shaft to wrap around the stem) is a rim of short hairs, with a few scattered hairs on the leaf margin at the leaf base. The joints along the stems are hairless.

Seed heads, borne on several stems per plant, are spike-like clusters of 12–14 burrs. Each burr (0.5–1 cm across) is a ball of stout, broad, spiny bristles that are joined together at the base. The burrs fall off readily when ripe and cling tightly to clothing, animal hides and human skin. They can also penetrate bare feet.



Queensland Government

Habitat and distribution

Mossman river grass is native to Central America and southern North America.

It is a widespread and common pest, particularly in sandy soils and at the beach.

Control

The most effective control method is to kill young plants before they set seed. This can be done by cultivation, pulling by hand, burning off with heat using flame throwers or steam jets, or by spraying with herbicide.

Herbicides for the control of Mossman River grass (out of crop) are provided in Table 1 below. Many selective herbicides are available for in-crop situations. Consult your local Department of Employment, Economic Development and Innovation office for additional in-crop information.

Further information

Further information is available from your local government office, or by contacting Biosecurity Queensland (call 13 25 23 or visit our website at www.biosecurity.qld.gov.au).

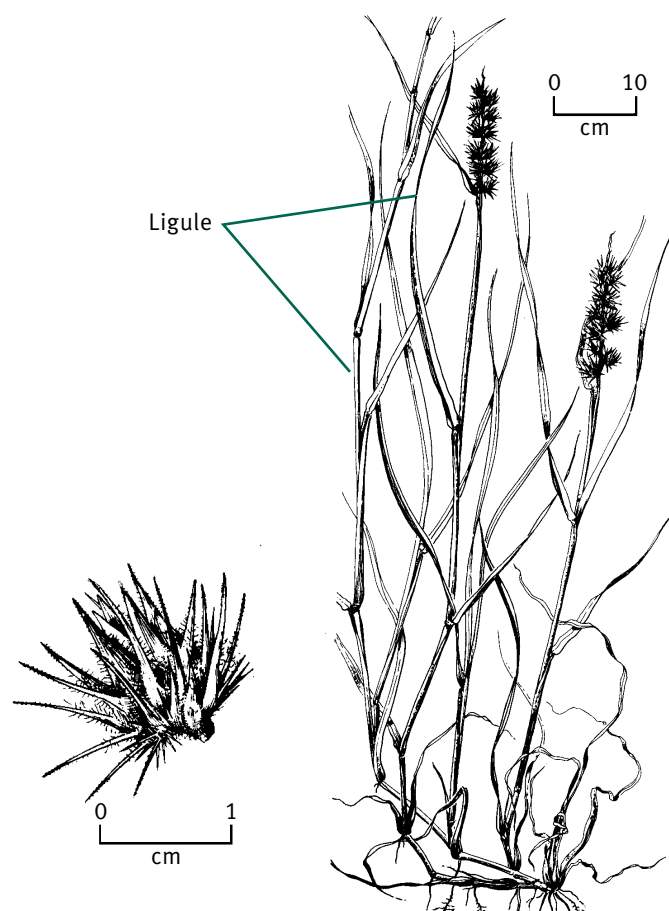


Table 1 Herbicides registered for the control of Mossman river grass

Situation	Herbicide	Rate	Comments	
Around buildings and public areas	Glyphosate 360	Knapsack 5–7 ml/L	Overall spraying to point of run-off	
	Round-up	Knapsack 5–7 ml/L		
	Zero	Knapsack 20/L		
	Glyphosate 360	Ropewick(dilute 1 part chemical to 2 parts water)		Ropewick allows application to individual plants
	Round-up			
	Zero	Ropewick (use undiluted)		
Residual pre-emergent control of annual grasses in paths, lawns and around some trees and shrubs	Casoron	600 g/100 m ²	Spread granules evenly over the soil of the area to be treated Remove existing weeds by hand, cultivation or herbicide spray	
Established plants in revegetation/reforestation	Fusilade	50–100 ml/10 L	Higher rate for established plants Thoroughly wet target weeds Use surfactant as per label	

Read the label carefully before use. Always use the herbicide in accordance with the directions on the label.

Fact sheets are available from Department of Employment, Economic Development and Innovation (DEEDI) service centres and our Business Information Centre (telephone 13 25 23). Check our website at www.deedi.qld.gov.au to ensure you have the latest version of this fact sheet. The control methods referred to in this fact sheet should be used in accordance with the restrictions (federal and state legislation, and local government laws) directly or indirectly related to each control method. These restrictions may prevent the use of one or more of the methods referred to, depending on individual circumstances. While every care is taken to ensure the accuracy of this information, DEEDI does not invite reliance upon it, nor accept responsibility for any loss or damage caused by actions based on it.