

Invasive plants and animals

## Para grass *Brachiaria mutica*



## The problem

Para grass is a common weed in many cane growing areas. It has been used in tropical locations as a fodder species, especially as a ponded pasture in beef production. This plant can be a very aggressive invader, particularly in low-lying ungrazed areas and in sugar cane crops. It is often found in wet situations, especially drains, but will also grow in deep soils in non-swampy areas. The ability to thrive in wet areas highlights this species as a potential threat to natural wetland ecosystems. Native plants are significantly displaced by the vigorous growth of this weed. It also invades areas of disturbed remnant vegetation on suitable soils.

## Description

This weed is a perennial grass up to about 1 m tall. The stems are hollow and robust, creeping in a prostrate growth habit. These stems stand erect towards the ends, and sprout new roots wherever the nodes touch the ground. Leaf blades are hairy and dark green in colour. They are usually up to 15 cm long and less than 1 cm wide, tapering to a long, fine point. The leaf sheaths are also hairy, particularly where they join the stem. Flower heads are up to 18 cm long and are made up of several spikes, each about 5 cm long. Seeds cluster thickly along each of these spikes, although para grass seldom sets seed in southern Queensland.

## Management strategies

Grazing para grass prevents it dominating other vegetation.

If treating para grass in an aquatic situation, be sure to only use products registered for that particular use. Not in waterways deeper than 60 cm.

## Declaration details

Para grass is not a declared plant under the *Land Protection (Pest and Stock Route Management) Act 2002*, however, plants that are not declared under state legislation may have control requirements imposed by local governments.

## Further information

Further information is available from the vegetation management/weed control/environmental staff at your local government.

**TABLE 1 – HERBICIDES REGISTERED FOR THE CONTROL OF PARA GRASS**

Method	Herbicide	Rate	Registration status	Comments
Foliar application (knapsack)	glyphosate (360 g/L)	200 mL per 15 L water	Registered	Apply to actively growing plants at the early head stage. Do not apply to weeds growing over water. Do not allow water to return to dry channels and drains within four days of application.
Foliar	glyphosate (360 g/L)	9 L per ha	Registered	Apply to actively growing plants at the early head stage. Do not apply to weeds growing over water. Do not allow water to return to dry channels and drains within four days of application. Do not spray across open bodies of water and do not allow spray to enter the water.
Handgun	glyphosate (360g/L)	1.3 L per 100 L water	Registered	Apply to actively growing plants at the early head stage. Do not apply to weeds growing over water. Do not allow water to return to dry channels and drains within four days of application. Do not spray across open bodies of water and do not allow spray to enter the water.

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

Fact sheets are available from DPI&F service centres and the DPI&F Information Centre phone (13 25 23). Check our web site <[www.dpi.qld.gov.au](http://www.dpi.qld.gov.au)> to ensure you have the latest version of this fact sheet. The control methods referred to in this Pest Fact 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 utilisation 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, the Department of Primary Industries and Fisheries does not invite reliance upon it, nor accept responsibility for any loss or damage caused by actions based on it.