



Mossman river grass

Cenchrus echinatus



Description

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 with bright mid-green leaves. The leaf sheaths are purplish-red, especially in the older seedlings.

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

The leaves are flat and rather stiff, tapering towards the tip; are 5–25 cm long by 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 to 14 burrs. Each burr, ½ to 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.



Habitat

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

It is a widespread and common pest, particularly on 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 by flame throwers or steam jets, or by spraying with herbicide.

Herbicides for the control of Mossman River grass out of crop, are given in the table below. Many selective herbicides are available for in-crop situations; consult your local DPI office for additional in-crop information.

Further information

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

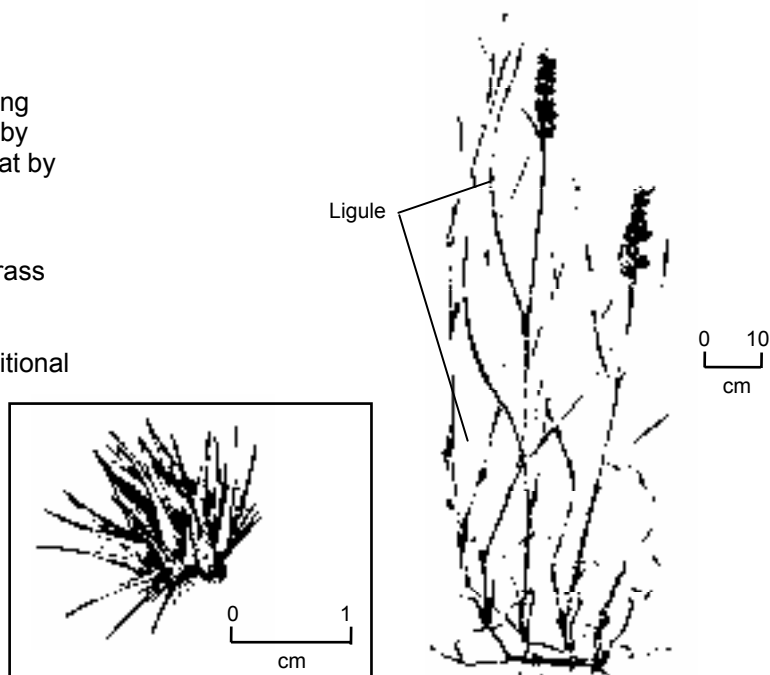


TABLE 1 – HERBICIDES REGISTERED FOR THE CONTROL OF MOSSMAN RIVER GRASS

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

Fact sheets are available from NRW service centres and the NRW Information Centre phone (07 3237 1435). Check our web site <www.nrw.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 Natural Resources and Water does not invite reliance upon it, nor accept responsibility for any loss or damage caused by actions based on it.

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