



Declared Plant Policy

This policy relates to natural resources management under section 9(1)(d) of the Landscape South Australia Act 2019 (the Act), enabling co-ordinated implementation and promotion of sound management programs and practices for the use, development or protection of natural resources of the State. Specifically, this policy provides guidance on the use and management of natural resources relating to the prevention or control of impacts caused by pest species of plants that may have an adverse effect on the environment, primary production or the community, as per object s7(1)(f) of the Act.

gamba grass (*Andropogon gayanus*)

Gamba grass is one of the thirty-two Weeds of National Significance, which are subject to a prohibition on sale in all States and Territories. It is a tropical grass not known to grow in South Australia. In line with the national strategy, sale of gamba grass plants and seed is prohibited in South Australia as in other jurisdictions.

Management Plan for Gamba Grass

Outcomes

- Prevention of national trade in Weeds of National Significance

Objectives

- Prevent any supply of gamba grass, including movement as a produce contaminant, via South Australia to other States or Territories where it is an invasive weed.

Best Practice Implementation

- Compliance action in the event of gamba grass being produced in South Australia for sale.

Regional Implementation

Refer to regional management plans for further details.

Region	Actions
Alinytjara Wilurara	Prohibit sale and movement
Eyre Peninsula	Prohibit sale and movement
Green Adelaide	Prohibit sale and movement
Hills and Fleurieu	Prohibit sale and movement
Kangaroo Island	Prohibit sale and movement
Limestone Coast	Prohibit sale and movement
Murraylands and Riverland	Prohibit sale and movement
Northern and Yorke	Prohibit sale and movement
South Australian Arid Lands	Prohibit sale and movement

Declaration

To implement this policy, gamba grass is declared under the *Landscape South Australia Act 2019* throughout the whole of the State of South Australia. Its entry to South Australia, movement or transport on a public road by itself or as a contaminant, or sale by itself or as a contaminant are prohibited.

Gamba grass is declared in category 2 under the Act for the purpose of setting maximum penalties and for other purposes. Any permit to allow its entry, road transport or sale can only be issued by the Chief Executive of the Department for Environment and Water or their delegate pursuant to section 197.

Under the *Landscape South Australia (General) Regulations 2020*, Regulation 27 specifies the conditions under which a person is exempt from the operation of section 186 and may transport wool, grain or other produce or goods carrying gamba grass on public roads, or bring them into the State. Regulation 28 specifies conditions under which a person is exempt from the operation of section 188(2) and may sell wool, grain or other produce or goods carrying gamba grass. Note that certain produce or goods may be excluded from these general movement and sale exemptions by Gazettal Notice of the Chief Executive, DEW.

The following sections of the Act apply to gamba grass throughout each of the regions noted below:

Region	AW	EP	GA	HF	KI	LC	MR	NY	SAAL
Sections of Act									
186(1) Prohibiting entry to area	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
186(2) Prohibiting movement on public roads	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
188(1) Prohibiting sale of the plant	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
188(2) Prohibiting sale of contaminated goods	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
190 Requiring notification of presence									
192(1) Land owners to destroy the plant on their properties									
192(2) Land owners to control the plant on their properties									
194 Recovery of control costs on adjoining road reserves									

Review

This policy is to be reviewed by 2025, or in the event of a change in its status as a Weed of National Significance.

Weed Risk

Invasiveness

Gamba grass spreads by seeds, which are produced from the second year of its life. Mature plants can produce between 15,000 and 244,000 seeds. Most seed falls within 5 metres of the parent plant and less than 1% falls more than 10m away. On occasion seeds may be dispersed long distances by wind, floodwaters, animals, contaminated machinery and hay. Streams are important spread corridors into remote locations and transport corridors also allow dispersal.

Germination occurs from early wet season storms in October to the usual commencement of the wet season in December. Plants which have been burnt or slashed earlier in the year can commence growth before the monsoon on their underground reserves.

Impacts

Can become the dominant grass species in wet tropical savannahs. Infestations replace native pastures and cause a decline in the diversity and abundance of native fauna and flora directly through competition and indirectly through increased fire intensity. When not intensively managed, fire risk from gamba grass also poses a major threat to infrastructure and culturally important sites.

Potential distribution

Gamba grass is not known to grow outside the tropics. While it can persist with around 400 mm annual rainfall, it prefers 750-1500 mm annual rainfall for growth.

Feasibility of Containment

Control costs

Control is by herbicides or burning. This may not be economic in many parts of tropical Australia due to their remoteness. Prevention of spread is recognised as the most effective way to manage gamba grass.

Persistence

Gamba grass persists by perennial growth. It also regenerates after burning or clearing by seed. It high seed production forms seed banks of 600 – 3,500 seeds per square metre although seed longevity is short, with rapid decline in viability over the dry season and very low seed survival after 12 months.

Current distribution

Not present in South Australia. Naturalised in the Northern Territory Top End, Western Australian Kimberley region and the Cape York, Atherton Tablelands and coastal areas of North Queensland.

State Level Risk Assessment

Assessment using the Biosecurity SA Weed Risk Management System gave the following comparative weed risk and feasibility of containment scores by land use:

Land use	Weed Risk	Feasibility of control	Response at State Level
Irrigated pastures	negligible 0	very high 0	monitor
Aquatic	negligible 0	very high 0	monitor
Native vegetation	negligible 0	very high 0	monitor

Considerations

Gamba grass is one of the Weeds of National Significance, which are subject to a uniform prohibition on sale in all jurisdictions. In line with the draft national strategy on gamba grass, sale of the plant and its seed is prohibited in South Australia.

Gamba grass was introduced to Australia as a pasture plant for the tropics in the 1930s and is still maintained for this purpose in northern Australia. There is no demand for gamba grass plants in South Australia, and prohibiting its sale it does not inconvenience the livestock or nursery industries. It is declared under the *Landscape South Australia Act 2019* in compliance with the national strategic plan.

Synonymy

Andropogon gayanus Kunth, Révis. Gramin. 1: 163 (1829).

Nomenclatural synonym:

Sorghum gayanum (Kunth) Kuntze, Revis. Gen. Pl. 2: 791 (1891).

Taxonomic synonyms:

Andropogon guineensis Schumach., Beskr. Guin. Pl. 51 (1827).

Andropogon infrasulcatus Reznik, Bull. Mus. Natl. Hist. Nat. II, 5: 496 (1933).

Andropogon reconditus Steud., Syn. Pl. Glumac. 1: 386 (1854).

References

Natural Resource Management Ministerial Council (2012) Weeds of National Significance Gamba Grass (*Andropogon gayanus*) Strategic Plan 2012–2017 (Australian Weeds Committee: Canberra).

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Minister for Environment and Water

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