



Government
of South Australia

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.

fountain grass (*Cenchrus setaceus*)

Fountain grass is a perennial tussock grass that has been widely planted in South Australia for ornamental purposes and is established from garden escapes.

Management Plan for Fountain Grass

Outcomes

- Native vegetation protected from the impacts of fountain grass.

Objectives

- Further spread of fountain grass into native vegetation minimised.

Best Practice Implementation

- Regional landscape boards and Green Adelaide to increase awareness of the impacts of fountain grass.
- Regional landscape boards in the active control area and Green Adelaide to map infestations and prioritise for control.
- Regional landscape boards in the active control area and Green Adelaide to develop partnerships with stakeholders to achieve effective control of fountain grass.
- Regional landscape boards, Green Adelaide and the Chief Executive of the Department for Environment and Water to enforce the prohibition on sale of fountain grass.

Regional Implementation

Refer to regional management plans for further details.

fountain grass policy

Region	Actions
Alinytjara Wilurara	Destroy infestations
Eyre Peninsula	Contain spread
Green Adelaide	Contain spread
Hills and Fleurieu	Contain spread
Kangaroo Island	Monitor
Limestone Coast	Destroy infestations
Murraylands and Riverland	Contain spread
Northern and Yorke	Limited action
South Australian Arid Lands	Monitor

Declaration

To implement this policy, fountain grass is declared under the *Landscape South Australia Act 2019* throughout the whole of the State of South Australia so that further spread can be prevented. 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.

The Alinytjara Wilurara, Eyre Peninsula, Hills and Fleurieu, Limestone Coast, and Murraylands and Riverland Landscape Boards and Green Adelaide may require land owners to control fountain grass plants growing on their land. These authorities are required to control plants on road reserves in their regions and may recover costs from the adjoining land owners.

Fountain grass is declared in category 3 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 regional landscape board or Green Adelaide 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 fountain grass on public roads, or bring it 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 fountain 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 fountain grass throughout each of the regions noted below:

Sections of Act	Region									
	AW	EP	GA	HF	KI	LC	MR	NY	SAAL	
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) Landowners to destroy the plant on their properties										
192(2) Landowners to control the plant on their properties	X	X	X	X		X	X			
194 Recovery of control costs on adjoining road reserves	X	X	X	X		X	X			

Review

This policy is to be reviewed by 2025, or in the event of a change in one or more regional management plans for fountain grass.

Weed Risk

Invasiveness

Fountain grass seed is mainly dispersed by wind but can also be carried by vehicles, humans, livestock, animals and birds. It establishes on road reserves and other unmanaged rocky or sandy sites.

Fountain grass is well adapted to post-fire regeneration, and burning may contribute to its invasion.

Impacts

Fountain grass can form dense pure stands that exclude all other herbaceous vegetation. Once the plant forms these dense infestations it can have high nuisance value, impeding both pedestrian and vehicular access.

Fountain grass out-competes and suppresses native vegetation. It can increase fire risk compared to other roadside weeds that accumulate less dry matter. It is of little value to grazing due to its rough course leaves which make it unpalatable to stock.

Potential distribution

In Australia fountain grass has been found as far north as Cape York and as far south as southern Tasmania, implying a wide ecological range and a broad potential distribution in South Australia. This is supported by the wide scatter of the known infestations.

Fountain grass is tolerant of high temperatures, high humidity, and acidic to alkaline soils. It is drought tolerant and established plants can grow in areas where rainfall is less than 127 mm of rain annually. However it does not survive prolonged periods at low temperatures and does not tolerate saline conditions.

Feasibility of Containment

Control costs

Fountain grass is difficult to eliminate, as control may need to be repeated several times a year. The plant has a long-lived seed which makes continued monitoring after treatment essential.

Control is directed initially to outlying populations followed by treatment of the core area. Small infestations of fountain grass can be removed by uprooting plants and destroying their seed heads.

Extensive infestations of fountain grass are best controlled by a combination of herbicides and mechanical techniques.

Persistence

Research has shown that seeds of fountain grass can remain viable in soil for up to 10 years in the soil, implying the presence of a significant seed bank that makes continued monitoring after control treatment essential.

Current distribution

Fountain grass is scattered in the Eyre Peninsula, Green Adelaide, Hills and Fleurieu, Limestone Coast, Murraylands and Riverland and Northern and Yorke regions. It has also been recorded from the South Australian Arid Lands and Kangaroo Island regions.

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
Native vegetation	high 168	high 23	Contain spread

Considerations

Risk assessment indicates a management action at State level of containment in native vegetation. Regional management plans vary according to regional habitats and presence of the weed. The Eyre Peninsula, Green Adelaide, Hills and Fleurieu, and Murraylands and Riverland regions aim to contain spread, and Kangaroo Island monitors for any incursion of fountain grass. Alinytjara Wilurara and Limestone Coast aim to destroy any infestations found. Limited action is planned to be taken in Northern and Yorke, and the weed is monitored in the South Australian Arid Lands.

Fountain grass has previously been available for sale throughout the State as an ornamental plant. It was used in gardens and landscape plantings from which it has readily escaped, establishing wild populations at a number of sites across the region.

The non-seeding hybrid fountain grass *Cenchrus advena* (Wipff & Veldkamp) Morrone includes many cultivars such as Moulin Rouge, Cherry Sparkler, Rubrum, Purple Splash, Cupreum Compactum, Fireworks, Sky Rocket and Viridis. It is not included in this policy and not declared at this time.

Synonymy

Cenchrus setaceus (Forssk.) Morrone, Ann. Bot. (Oxford), n.s. 106: 129 (2010).

Basionym:

Phalaris setacea Forssk., Fl. Aegypt.-Arab. 17 (1775).

Nomenclatural synonyms:

Pennisetum setaceum (Forssk.) Chiov., Boll. Soc. Bot. Ital. 1923: 113 (1923).

Hon David Speirs MP

Minister for Environment and Water

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