



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.*

### innocent weed (*Cenchrus longispinus* and *Cenchrus spinifex*)

Innocent weeds (*Cenchrus longispinus* and *Cenchrus spinifex*) are fast-growing annual grasses that produce spiny burrs, causing problems in the wool and dried fruit industries. They are widespread across South Australia.

### Management Plan for Innocent Weed

#### Outcomes

- Prevent the further spread of innocent weed distribution within susceptible land uses throughout South Australia.

#### Objectives

- Control high priority infestations of innocent weed including incursions in previously uninfested areas.
- Contain all established infestations.
- Prevent the reinfestation of areas cleared of innocent weed.

#### Best Practice Implementation

- Regional landscape boards and Green Adelaide to ensure infestations on roadsides, public or private land are contained.
- Regional landscape boards and Green Adelaide to monitor areas identified as high risk for stock, produce and vehicle contamination. Examples may include parking bays, campgrounds, stock sale yards and roadhouses.
- Regional landscape boards and Green Adelaide to ensure compliance by landholders of restriction of movement of contaminated produce, livestock, and vehicles from infested areas.

#### Regional Implementation

Refer to regional management plans for further details.

innocent weed policy

Region	Actions
Alinytjara Wilurara	Destroy infestations
Eyre Peninsula	Manage sites
Green Adelaide	Destroy infestations
Hills and Fleurieu	Destroy infestations
Kangaroo Island	Contain spread – regional alert
Limestone Coast	Destroy infestations
Murraylands and Riverland	Manage weed
Northern and Yorke	Contain spread
South Australian Arid Lands	Protect sites

**Declaration**

To implement this policy, innocent weed is declared under the *Landscape South Australia Act 2019* throughout the whole of the State of South Australia. Its movement or transport on a public road, by itself or as a contaminant, or sale by itself or as a contaminant are prohibited. Regional landscape boards and Green Adelaide may require land owners to control innocent weed 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.

Innocent weed is declared in category 2 under the Act for the purpose of setting maximum penalties and for other purposes. Any permit to allow its 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 innocent weed on public roads. 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 innocent weed. 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 innocent weed 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									
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	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
194 Recovery of control costs on adjoining road reserves	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X

## **Review**

This policy is to be reviewed by 2025, or in the event of a change in any regional management plan for innocent weed.

## **Weed Risk**

### Invasiveness

New incursions of innocent weed are generally due to introduction of contaminated stock, vehicles, or soil products. It may rapidly invade degraded areas with little competition, but intact pastures are less vulnerable to invasion.

Seeds are enclosed in hard burry spikelets. They ripen rapidly after wind pollination and may remain viable in the soil for up to 5 years. Germination occurs rapidly after summer rainfall events over 5 mm, and seedlings may reach flowering size in less than a month.

### Impacts

Innocent weed is a wool contaminant that can cause injury to shearers and wool handlers. It also impacts upon the dried vine fruit industry by making handling more difficult and downgrading fruit contaminated by burrs.

It infests some urban areas as a weed of footpaths, bare streetscapes and recreation grounds, although it is less of an issue in maintained gardens and lawns.

As it is spring-summer growing, innocent weed is not a competitor with the major broad acre crops. Although easily controlled in lucerne, burr contamination can reduce the value of lucerne hay.

### Potential distribution

Innocent weed can potentially grow in most parts of South Australia although in the northern part of the State it would be restricted to sites receiving run-on water. It is most abundant on sandy soils receiving frequent summer rainfall events.

## **Feasibility of Containment**

### Control costs

Innocent weed can generally be controlled in most irrigated and horticultural crops to prevent contamination of produce, but due to several germinations repeat treatments may be needed during the growing season. Control of broad acre infestations by herbicide can be prohibitively expensive compared to the income produced from the land.

### Persistence

Once established in dryland areas, innocent weed is very difficult to control because seed may remain viable in the burrs for at least five years. Some seed readily germinates after summer rains, but others in the same burr will remain dormant to germinate later, even skipping a year if there is a shortage of rain in late spring and summer.

Current distribution

Innocent weed is present in every region of South Australia. It is most significant as a weed in the Riverland, where the irrigation areas provide ideal conditions for its growth, and in the northern Murray Mallee.

**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:

<b>Land use</b>	<b>Weed Risk</b>	<b>Feasibility of control</b>	<b>Response at State Level</b>
Crop-pasture rotation	low 28	very high 5	Monitor
Grazing only: southern agricultural	medium 76	medium 53	Manage sites
Grazing: rangeland	medium 51	high 20	Protect sites
Irrigated pastures	high 112	high 20	Contain spread
Vegetables	low 29	high 28	Monitor
Perennial horticulture	medium 51	medium 45	Manage sites
forestry	negligible 2	medium 41	Monitor
Urban	low 14	medium 36	Limited action

**Considerations**

Most innocent weed infestations are *Cenchrus longispinus*, which entered South Australia along the River Murray in the early 20th century but had also been introduced through Adelaide as an ornamental grass some decades earlier. *Cenchrus spinifex* is less common.

At State level, the actions recommended by risk assessment range from site management to containment in the land uses impacted (permanent grazing, horticulture, rangeland and irrigated pastures). In urban areas, local action is implemented by Councils and landowners. While sale and movement are prohibited uniformly across the State, regional actions vary according to the land uses in each region.

In the Alinytjara Wilurara, Green Adelaide, Hills and Fleurieu and Limestone Coast regions where innocent weed is localised, landscape boards aim to destroy infestations. The other five regions have plans ranging from containment to site management according to regional land uses.

## Synonymy

*Cenchrus longispinus* (Hack.) Fernald, Rhodora 45:388 (1943)

### Basionym:

*Cenchrus echinatus* L. forma *longispinus* Hack. in Kneuck., Allg. Bot. Z. Syst. 9: 169 (1903)

### Nomenclatural synonym:

*Cenchrus pauciflorus* Benth. var. *longispinus* (Hack.) Jansen and Wacht., Ned. Kruidk. Arch. 56: 246 (1949)

### Taxonomic synonyms:

*Cenchrus carolinianus* Walter, Fl. Carol. 79 (1788)

*Nastus carolinianus* (Walter) Lunell, Amer. Midl. Naturalist 4: 214 (1915)

Other common names include Bohena beauty, gentle Annie, hedgehog grass and spiny burrgrass.

*Cenchrus spinifex* Cav., Icon. 5: 38 (1799)

### Taxonomic synonyms:

*Cenchrus humilis* Hitchc., Contr. U.S. Natl. Herb. 24: 488 (1927)

*Cenchrus incertus* M.A.Curtis, Boston J. Nat. Hist. 1(2): 135 (1835)

*Cenchrus parviceps* Shinnars, Field & Lab. 24: 73 (1956)

*Cenchrus pauciflorus* Benth., Bot. Voy. Sulphur 56 (1844)

*Cenchrus roseus* E.Fourn. ex Hemsl., Biol. Cent.-Amer., Bot. 3: 507 (1885)

*Cenchrus strictus* Chapm., Bot. Gaz. 3: 20 (1878)

Other common names include American burrgrass, bayonet grass, coast sandburr, dune sandburr, hedgehog grass, lesser burrgrass, spiny burrgrass and spring burrgrass.

Hon David Speirs MP  
**Minister for Environment and Water**

Date: 28 March 2021