



INVASIVE ALIEN SPECIES

Serrated Tussock

Nassella trichotoma
(Nees) Hack. ex Arechav.

Serrated tussock is one of the worst invasive plants in Australia and is difficult to control. Mature plants can produce up to 140,000 seeds per year which can stay viable for many years in the soil.

The plant invades grasslands and competes with other species, reducing biodiversity. It is mostly indigestible to livestock and thus decreases pasture productivity. It also increases fire risk.

- Not yet found in Canada
- One of the worst perennial invasive plants in Australia
- Infestations can result in loss of crops and livestock
- Considered a fire hazard
- Prohibited in seed under the *Seeds Act*

Flower and seed heads (Bill Strong)

Where it's found

Serrated tussock has not yet been found in Canada.

Over the last century, since its initial introduction, it has gradually spread over millions of hectares of pasture in south-eastern Australia. Serrated tussock, native to South America, tends to grow along roadsides and in pastures.

What it looks like

Serrated tussock is a perennial grass with thin, bright-green, hairless leaves and long purplish, branched seed heads that lean toward the ground. Each plant can grow to a height of up to 70 cm. Its leaves are thin, tightly rolled (will roll smoothly like a needle between index finger and thumb), and have small, easily-felt serrations along their edges.

How it spreads

Serrated tussock has branched clusters of flowers (panicles) that break off from the parent plant and are easily carried by the wind for over 20 km. As the panicles move, seeds are dropped. Seeds can also be transported in soil, by the muddy wheels of vehicles, in contaminated hay, in seed lots, and on animals and clothing. Seeds can remain dormant in soil for several years and germinate to form seedlings after the soil is disturbed. Serrated tussock is less likely to invade healthy, well managed grasslands.

Legislation

Serrated tussock is listed as a prohibited noxious weed in the *Weed Seeds Order* under the *Seeds Act*. Its presence in domestic and imported seed for planting is prohibited.

Reporting this invasive plant should be done through your local CFIA office. For a list of offices please call 1-800-442-2342 or visit the the CFIA website at: www.inspection.gc.ca.

Invasive plants are plant species that spread when introduced outside of their natural past or present distribution and cause serious and often irreversible damage to Canada's ecosystems, economy and society.



A - Serrated tussock seeds (USDA APHIS PPQ Archive, USDA APHIS PPQ, Bugwood.org) B - Plant of serrated tussock (Bill Strong)
C - Flower heads (Julia Scher, USDA APHIS PPQ, Bugwood.com)

What we can do about it

There are steps you can take to help stop the spread of this weed in Canada:

- Use certified seed;
- Use clean grain, hay and straw; and,
- Look for serrated tussock in crops and in disturbed areas.