

# Texas needle grass - Statutory Weed Management Plan

## *Nassella leucotricha* (Trin. & Rupr.) Pohl

### Interpretation:

In this Weed Management Plan (10/4/2011):

- "Act" means the *Weed Management Act 1999*.
- "Approved quarantine place" means a place approved by the Secretary under section 70 of the *Plant Quarantine Act 1997* for the purpose of examining any prescribed matter imported into or to be exported out of the State.
- "Court fine" means a prescribed penalty for breaches against the Act. Court fines may be imposed if a person is convicted of any offence against the Act.
- "DPIPWE" means the Department of Primary Industries, Parks, Water and Environment, Tasmania.
- "Infringement fine" means a prescribed penalty for breaches against the Act. Infringement fines are imposed by way of an infringement notice that may be issued by a Weed Inspector.
- "Inspector" means a Weed Inspector appointed under section 34 of the Act.
- "Penalty unit" means the basic unit of the fine for which persons who fail to comply with any prohibition or requirement under the Act may be liable. See [values of penalty units](#) under the *Penalty Units and Other Penalties Act 1987* for more details.
- "Quarantine Tasmania" means that branch of the Department of Primary Industries, Parks, Water and Environment that, in cooperation with the Australian Quarantine Inspection Service, maintains both overseas and interstate quarantine barriers for this State.
- "[Regional Weed Management Officer](#)" means a person employed in the Department of Primary Industries, Parks, Water and Environment under that specific title.
- "Regulations" means the *Weed Management Regulations 2007*.
- "Secretary" means the Secretary of the Department of Primary Industries, Parks, Water and Environment.
- "WoNS" means Weeds of National Significance. The WoNS program is a federally funded initiative for the development and implementation of State and national strategies for the management of a group of Australia's worst weeds.
- "Zone A" includes those Tasmanian municipalities for which eradication of a declared weed is the principal management objective. These municipalities are either free of the declared weed, host only small, isolated infestations, or host larger infestations which are deemed eradicable because a strategic management plan exists and the resources required to

implement it have been or are likely to be secured. See [Management of Texas needle grass by municipality](#) (Section 12) for details.

- “Texas needle grass” means *Nassella leucotricha* (Trin. & Rupr.) Pohl (syn. *Stipa leucotricha* Trin. & Rupr.) and includes the whole plant or plant parts. It does not include products such as tablets, lotions, tinctures or other preparations that contain extracts of this plant or other dead, non-reproductive *Nassella leucotricha* materials. People who are uncertain about whether products (e.g. dried materials) contain plant parts capable of producing a living plant should contact a [Regional Weed Management Officer](#).

### **1. Purpose of this management plan:**

The purpose of this Weed Management Plan for Texas needle grass is to:

- Provide direction upon the implementation of the *Act* with respect to Texas needle grass.
- Encourage and facilitate an increase in the effectiveness with which Texas needle grass is managed throughout Tasmania.
- Provide legislative support to regional and local efforts to manage Texas needle grass in a strategic and integrated manner.

### **2. Area covered by this management plan:**

The State of Tasmania is covered by this management plan.

### **3. Description and distribution of the weed:**

Texas needle grass is a tussock forming perennial grass growing up to 1.5 m high. Texas needle grass reproduces from seed which is produced on the plant base and stem (cleistogenes) as well as from seed heads. Long distance dispersal of seed is usually a product of adherence to coats of animals, clothing, machinery, or in stock feed.

Texas needle grass is highly invasive and can form dense infestations, particularly on poorly managed sites. It prefers open grassland sites similar to those favoured by native grassland species. The seed can also contaminate wool and injure sheep by imbedding in skin and eyes.

Texas needle grass was first recorded in Australia in 1934 in Melbourne and has since spread through the northern and western suburbs of Melbourne and into central Victoria. It is also naturalised in South Australia.

The first infestation of Texas needle grass in Tasmania was discovered in a paddock near Rokeby, southern Tasmania in late 2010. Refer to [Management of Texas needle grass by municipality](#) (Section 12) for information on the distribution of Texas needle grass by municipality.

See the DPIPW [Texas Needle Grass Information Page](#) for more information on this weed.

#### **4. Importation of declared weed:**

##### **(1) A person must not import or allow to be imported into Tasmania any Texas needle grass.**

*It is an offence against section 57(1) of the Act to fail to comply with this prohibition. A person found committing that offence may incur an infringement fine of 4 penalty units. A person convicted in court of that offence may be liable to a fine not exceeding 50 penalty units.*

*The Secretary may exempt a person from this prohibition under section 60 of the Act.*

Actions to assist compliance in this matter could include but are not limited to the following:

- Persons travelling to Tasmania, in particular from areas infested with Texas needle grass, such as Victoria (especially the northern and western suburbs of Melbourne and Central Victoria) and South Australia, should conduct thorough searches for the presence of the plant and apply appropriate hygiene measures, such as clothing, vehicle, machinery and baggage inspection and cleaning. Questions or concerns about weed hygiene issues should be directed to Quarantine Tasmania personnel before or directly upon disembarkation in Tasmania.
- Persons importing items to Tasmania that may contain Texas needle grass should have these checked for the presence of the plant. This can be arranged through Quarantine Tasmania.
- Persons importing ornamental plants should ensure their stock does not include Texas needle grass.

**(2) Feed grain may be imported according to specifications in the Plant Quarantine Manual (Tasmania), Import Requirement 30: Grain and Grain Products Intended for Animal feed – Import Conditions. This document establishes requirements for importing feed grain in order to minimise the risk of declared weed seed entry and establishment. Import Requirement 30 should be consulted by all existing and prospective feed grain importers.**

**(3) A person must not import any livestock that may be carrying Texas needle grass otherwise than in accordance with any measures prescribed under the Regulations.**

*It is an offence against section 57(3) of the Act to fail to comply with this prohibition. A person found committing this offence may incur an infringement fine of 4 penalty units. A person convicted of that offence in court may be liable to a fine not exceeding 50 penalty units.*

*The Secretary may exempt a person from this prohibition under section 60 of the Act.*

The prescribed measures for importing stock under regulation 5 of the Regulations are as follows:

- a) the length of hairs in the coat is not to exceed 25 mm;
- b) seeds are not to adhere to the coat or anywhere else on the livestock;
- c) a permit for importation is obtained from the Secretary, DPIPW;E;
- d) importation is direct to an approved facility for slaughter.

Actions to assist compliance in this matter could include but are not limited to the following:

- Persons importing livestock to Tasmania should liaise with suppliers on the subject of possible Texas needle grass contamination of stock.
- Persons purchasing livestock imported from areas infested with Texas needle grass should ensure their animals are confined to holding pens until they have undergone thorough external inspections and complete bowel evacuation. Pens should be checked subsequently for the emergence of Texas needle grass.
- Anyone importing stock to Tasmania should make him/herself familiar with regulation 5 of the Regulations.

**5. Procedures for notification of the occurrence of the weed:**

Inspectors shall notify a [Regional Weed Management Officer](#) of any Texas needle grass occurrences in municipalities or parts of municipalities where the weed is not yet recorded. Refer to Table 1 in [Management of Texas needle grass by municipality](#) (Section 12) for distribution of Texas needle grass in Tasmania by municipality.

**6. Sale, purchase, propagation, use, &c., of declared weed:**

**(1) A person must not:**

**(a) sell Texas needle grass or any material or thing containing or carrying Texas needle grass; or**

**(b) purchase or offer to purchase Texas needle grass or any material or thing containing or carrying Texas needle grass; or**

**(c) grow, propagate or scatter Texas needle grass; or**

**(d) store Texas needle grass or any material or thing containing or carrying Texas needle grass; or**

**(e) hire or offer for hire any material or thing containing or carrying Texas needle grass; or**

**(f) use Texas needle grass or any material or thing containing or carrying Texas needle grass; or**

**(g) deal with Texas needle grass or any material or thing containing or carrying Texas needle grass in any manner that is likely to result in the spread of the declared weed.**

*It is an offence against section 56(1) of the Act to fail to comply with this prohibition. A person found committing that offence may incur an infringement fine of 4 penalty units. A person convicted of that offence in court may be liable to a fine not exceeding 50 penalty units*

*The Secretary may exempt a person from this prohibition under section 60 of the Act.*

Refer to [Management of Texas needle grass by municipality](#) (Section 12) for direction on how this prohibition is to be implemented in Zone A and Zone B municipalities in Tasmania.

Actions to assist compliance in this matter could include but are not limited to the following:

- Persons giving away, bartering or selling, purchasing, growing, propagating or scattering, storing, using, or otherwise dealing with agricultural produce (e.g. wool, hay) likely to be contaminated with Texas needle grass should ensure appropriate production hygiene and inspection measures are undertaken. These include practicing integrated Texas needle grass control in pastures or crops likely to be harvested for sale or distribution, careful inspection of the product prior to sale or distribution and forgoing the sale and distribution of produce grown in areas where Texas needle grass control has not been undertaken successfully.

- Persons giving away, bartering or selling, purchasing, growing, propagating or scattering, storing, using, or otherwise dealing with ornamental plants should ensure their stock does not include Texas needle grass. This includes roadside stalls, market stalls, fundraising events, garden club swaps, nursery sales, supermarket plant sales and ANY OTHER activities that involve the distribution of ornamental plants.
- Persons giving away, bartering or selling, purchasing, storing, or otherwise dealing with firewood likely to be contaminated with Texas needle grass should ensure that appropriate hygiene and inspection measures are undertaken.
- Persons involved in the giving away, bartering or selling, purchasing, storing, hiring, using, or otherwise dealing with agricultural or roading machinery likely to be contaminated with Texas needle grass should ensure that appropriate inspection and hygiene measures are undertaken. These include introducing thorough visual checks and cleaning of machinery as routine tasks when preparing these items for sale or distribution.
- Persons involved in the giving away, bartering or selling, purchasing, storing, hiring, using, or otherwise dealing with livestock that may be carrying Texas needle grass should ensure appropriate hygiene measures are undertaken to prevent spread of this weed. These include cleaning stock externally and penning them for a suitable period to ensure they have emptied their bowels prior to transport from infested properties.
- Persons involved in the giving away, bartering or selling, purchasing, storing, using, or otherwise dealing with soil, gravel, lime, sand or other such materials from areas infested with Texas needle grass should ensure appropriate hygiene and inspection measures are undertaken. These include practicing integrated control of the weed in quarries, stockpile areas, wholesale or retail outlets and other places from which these materials are sold or distributed.
- Persons involved in the giving away, bartering or selling, purchasing, growing, propagating or scattering, storing, hiring, using, or otherwise dealing with agricultural produce, agricultural or roading machinery, stock, soil, gravel, sand or other such materials likely to be contaminated with Texas needle grass should take direction from any relevant local, regional or State agricultural hygiene programs being implemented in the municipality.
- Persons purchasing or hiring any items (agricultural produce, machinery, livestock, soil, gravel or other such materials) likely to be contaminated with Texas needle grass should liaise with suppliers on the issue of Texas needle grass contamination and keep accurate records of their purchase transactions. Buyers discovering Texas needle grass contamination post-purchase should implement practices that reduce the potential for Texas needle grass establishment and spread. These include, creating dedicated areas for the wash down of purchased machinery and vehicles, feeding out purchased fodder and grain in specified, small areas, penning suspect stock for external inspection and

bowel evacuation, and carefully monitoring any suspect soil, gravel or other such materials for the emergence of this weed.

**(2) Section 56(1) of the Act does not apply in respect of feed grain for animals that is:**

**(a) carrying a declared weed; and**

**(b) imported into Tasmania in accordance with any measures prescribed for the purpose of section 57(2) of the Act and as detailed in part 4(2) of this Management Plan.**

**(3) It is a defence in proceedings for an offence under section 56(1) of the Act if the defendant establishes that he or she took all reasonable actions to prevent the commission of the offence.**

**7. Measures to reduce the number of Texas needle grass plants, eradicate Texas needle grass from an area or restrict Texas needle grass to a particular area:**

**An Inspector may, by serving a notice on the owner of any place, require that owner to implement any of the measures described in this part of the Weed Management Plan or any other measures consistent with it.**

*It is an offence against section 13(3) of the Act to fail to comply with a requirement notice issued by an Inspector. A person who fails to comply with that notice may be issued with an infringement fine of 8 penalty units. A person convicted of that offence in court may be liable to a fine not exceeding 100 penalty units and, in the case of a continuing offence, a further fine not exceeding 5 penalty units for each day during which the offence continues.*

Actions to assist compliance in this matter by persons or organisations upon whose properties Texas needle grass occurs could include but are not limited to the following:

- Planning and implementation of a property management plan. Such a plan should be based on integrated weed management principles and include an inventory of Texas needle grass infestations in the area to which the plan relates, well-defined objectives, practicable control actions, follow-up actions, a realistic timeline and a budget, as a minimum. [Regional Weed Management Officers](#) or Inspectors may be contacted for advice on developing a property management plan for this plant.
- Seek information about supporting any council endorsed plans relating to Texas needle grass management in their municipality.

- Seek cooperation with neighbouring property owners when Texas needle grass control measures are being planned or implemented.

Other general actions to assist compliance:

- Persons or organisations responsible for managing land that is currently free of Texas needle grass should undertake prevention measures, especially when that land is suited to Texas needle grass establishment. Such prevention measures include:
  - Developing an ability to identify the plant;
  - Noting its occurrence and progress on nearby properties or transport corridors;
  - Undertaking control of small outbreaks without delay;
  - Arranging on-site quarantine for, or not bringing or allowing onto the property livestock, agricultural produce, vehicles, machinery, soil, gravel, lime or other such material that may be contaminated with Texas needle grass.

A [Regional Weed Management Officer](#) may be contacted for advice on keeping areas Texas needle grass free.

- Persons performing contract work of an agricultural, utility maintenance, roading or earthmoving nature, on-site consultations or assessments, deliveries or other visits in areas or properties infested with Texas needle grass should undertake appropriate hygiene measures. This also applies to owners of more than one property, who move vehicles, machinery, agricultural produce, livestock, gravel, soil, lime or other materials between these properties, when one or more property is infested. Hygiene measures include thorough visual checks upon clothing, footwear, vehicles and machinery and, cleaning of the same, prior to leaving the infested property. Developing a check-list will help ensure such routines are rigorous and consistent. Materials or items likely to be contaminated with Texas needle grass should not be moved from Texas needle grass infested areas or to Texas needle grass free areas until any contamination risks have been minimised.
- Persons wishing to conduct on-site disposal of Texas needle grass or any thing contaminated with Texas needle grass should contact an Inspector or a [Regional Weed Management Officer](#) first, in order to receive direction upon how best to do this.
- Persons considering transporting Texas needle grass or any thing contaminated with Texas needle grass for the purpose of disposal, should first seek advice from an Inspector or a [Regional Weed Management Officer](#) as to whether removal of the material from the site is the preferred option. If on-site disposal is not appropriate and transport to a suitable disposal facility is recommended, this should be undertaken in a manner that does not permit the release of seeds or other material. Note that municipal waste disposal facilities vary in their acceptance and



handling of declared weeds. Municipal waste disposal managers should be contacted for details

## **8. Storage in a specified area of any thing contaminated with the declared weed:**

**Any thing found to be contaminated with Texas needle grass may be removed to storage at an appropriate approved quarantine place. A [Regional Weed Management Officer](#) will determine whether removal to storage at any of these facilities or treatment/destruction of material in situ is most appropriate.**

*Failure to comply with this requirement is an offence against section 51(1) of the Act. A person found committing that offence may incur an infringement fine of 4 penalty units. A person convicted of that offence in court may be liable to a fine not exceeding 50 penalty units.*

*The Secretary may exempt a person from this requirement under section 60 of the Act.*

Actions to assist compliance in this matter could include but are not limited to the following:

- A person who discovers or suspects he/she possesses any thing, (e.g. fodder, livestock, machinery, soil, gravel) contaminated with Texas needle grass should contact an Inspector or a [Regional Weed Management Officer](#). The contaminated thing should not be moved, disturbed, treated or disposed of prior to making this contact. If Texas needle grass is confirmed, the person will be directed and advised in the proper management, including storage or disposal options, of the contaminated thing.

## **9. Any other measures the Minister considers appropriate to control the weed:**

There are no other measures appropriate for the management of Texas needle grass in Tasmania at this time.

## **10. Exemptions:**

A person may apply for an exemption from any of the provisions of the Act that relate to Texas needle grass. He/she should contact a [Regional Weed Management Officer](#) to discuss the reasons for seeking the exemption and obtain an exemption application form.

Persons granted an exemption should ensure they understand fully, any conditions specified in the exemption. Queries can be directed to a

[Regional Weed Management Officer.](#)

## **11. Review of this Weed Management Plan:**

A review of this Weed Management Plan may be undertaken at least once every five years if it is necessary and desirable to do so. The review will incorporate consultation with stakeholders deemed appropriate by the Secretary, DPIPW.

## **12. Management of Texas needle grass by municipality:**

Each Tasmanian municipality is classified into one of two management zones (Zones A or B) for the purposes of implementing this Weed Management Plan for Texas needle grass.

**Zone A Municipalities - eradication:** Eradication is the most appropriate management objective for Zone A municipalities which have little or no Texas needle grass, or when a credible plan for eradicating existing infestations is being developed and implemented. The ultimate management outcome for Zone A municipalities is achieving and maintaining the total absence of Texas needle grass from within municipal boundaries.

**Zone B municipalities - containment:** Containment is the most appropriate management objective for Zone B municipalities which have problematic infestations but no plan and/or resources to undertake control actions at a level required for eradication. The management outcome for Zone B municipalities is ongoing prevention of the spread of Texas needle grass from existing infestations to areas free or in the process of becoming free of Texas needle grass.

The decision regarding which category is most appropriate for a particular municipality at a particular time is made jointly by DPIPW and each municipality. Municipalities may change categories over time. For example, a Zone B municipality may decide to develop and implement a strategic plan for Texas needle grass, with eradication as the objective. Provided the plan is credible, this municipality would qualify for inclusion in Zone A. Conversely, a Zone A municipality with widespread infestations may decide to stop supporting a strategic plan for Texas needle grass eradication, in which case it would be re-classified as Zone B.

Table 1 lists the distribution and management measures of all Tasmanian municipalities currently classified as Zone A for Texas needle

grass. Note that all municipalities are currently classed as Zone A for Texas needle grass.

**Table 1. Distribution and management measures for Texas needle grass in municipalities classified as Zone A at 10/4/2011.**

Distribution based on Tasmanian Herbarium and DPIPWE records.

<b>Municipality</b>	<b>Texas needle grass distribution</b>	<b>Management measures*</b>
Break O'Day	None recorded	Prevention and early detection
Brighton	None recorded	Prevention and early detection
Burnie	None recorded	Prevention and early detection
Central Coast	None recorded	Prevention and early detection
Central Highlands	None recorded	Prevention and early detection
Circular Head	None recorded	Prevention and early detection
Clarence	Isolated occurrences	Implement integrated control program for eradication and prevent future occurrences
Derwent Valley	None recorded	Prevention and early detection
Devonport	None recorded	Prevention and early detection
Dorset	None recorded	Prevention and early detection
Flinders	None recorded	Prevention and early detection
George Town	None recorded	Prevention and early detection
Glamorgan/Spring Bay	None recorded	Prevention and early detection
Glenorchy	None recorded	Prevention and early detection

Hobart	None recorded	Prevention and early detection
Huon Valley	None recorded	Prevention and early detection
Kentish	None recorded	Prevention and early detection
King Island	None recorded	Prevention and early detection
Kingborough	None recorded	Prevention and early detection
Latrobe	None recorded	Prevention and early detection
Launceston	None recorded	Prevention and early detection
Meander Valley	None recorded	Prevention and early detection
Northern Midlands	None recorded	Prevention and early detection
Sorell	None recorded	Prevention and early detection
Southern Midlands	None recorded	Prevention and early detection
Tasman	None recorded	Prevention and early detection
Waratah/Wynyard	None recorded	Prevention and early detection
West Coast	None recorded	Prevention and early detection
West Tamar	None recorded	Prevention and early detection

\*When a DPIPWE approved weed management strategy that has local council endorsement exists, management of this declared weed in the municipality concerned should occur with direct reference to that strategy.

The following distribution categories are used in Table 1:

“None recorded”. This means the plant is not known to be naturalised in the municipality, either from the records of the Tasmanian Herbarium or from DPIPWE databases. In cases where the plant was known to be naturalised at a previous time but is not known there currently, the

description "Previously recorded, none known now" is used.

"Isolated occurrences". This means the species is uncommon in the municipality, with populations limited to one or a few. The number of plants is generally small and/or populations cover small areas.

"Localised infestations". This means the species is present in the municipality in moderate proportions, with populations numbering several. The number of plants is also moderate and/or populations cover moderate-sized areas.

"Widespread infestations". This means the species is very common in the municipality, with many populations present. The number of plants present is generally large and/or populations cover large areas.

Note that the distribution descriptions presented in Table 1 apply to naturalised populations of the plant only. They do not include amenity, garden, horticultural or other deliberate plantings unless specified. The descriptions are relative and provide a general indication only of the spatial status of the plant in the municipality. Detailed location information may be obtained by contacting a [Regional Weed Management Officer](#). In addition, if you have reason to believe any of the distribution information presented in Table 1 is incorrect, please advise a Regional Weed Management Officer.