Impact Assessment Record

Scientific Name: *Piptochaetium montevidense* (Spreng.) Parodi Common name: Uruguayan rice grass

QUESTION	COMMENTS	RATING	CONFIDENCE
Social			
1. Restrict human access?	"Forms dense tussocks to about 0.5m high" (CRC Weed Management, 2003), which would not restrict human access.	**L**	**MH**
2. Reduce tourism?	"can be difficult to identify because of its similarity to native grasses and *Austrostipa* species" (CRC Weed Management, 2003). This weed would not be obvious to the average visitor.	**L**	**MH**
3. Injurious to people?	"The leaf blade is hairless but covered with minute rough projections" (CRC Weed Management, 2003), although these are not noted as sharp and so not likely to cause injury.	**L**	**MH**
4. Damage to cultural sites?	See Q. 2, as a "native-looking" grass, this species would not detract from cultural sites, nor damage structures.	**L**	**MH**
Abiotic			
5. Impact flow?	Whilst this plant does invade streambanks (CRC Weed Management, 2003), the only documented occurrence in wet environments was in seasonally flooded, or "always" moist areas, rather than permanent waterways. This makes it unlikely to impact on water flow.	**L**	**H**
6. Impact water quality?	See Q. 5, unlikely to impact on water quality.	**L**	**H**
7. Increase soil erosion?	As "a perennial that forms tussocks" (CRC Weed Management, 2003), this plant should not increase erosion as it would not cause patches of exposed bare soil as dormant or annual species might.	**L**	**MH**
8. Reduce biomass?	Similar habit to the dominant kangaroo grass (*Themeda triandra*) that it was found invading near Altona (CRC Weed Management, 2003; Albrecht et al (eds), 1991). Likely to replace tussock biomass in the grassland communities that it invades.	**ML**	**MH**
9. Change fire regime?	As it is similar in habit to the vegetation that it displaces (see Q. 8) and "stimulated by fire" (CRC Weed Management, 2003) this plant is unlikely to change the fire regime in the communities that it invades.	**L**	**MH**
Community Habitat			
10. Impact on composition (a) high value EVC	EVC= Plain grassy woodland (E); CMA=Corangamite; Bioreg= Victorian Volcanic Plain; CLIMATE potential=VH. Formed a "dense sward" (Cunningham et al, 2003) where it invaded grassland in Victoria. Major displacement of some dominant species in the groundcover layer.	**MH**	**H**
(b) medium value EVC	EVC= Lowland Forest (D); CMA=Corangamite; Bioreg= Otway Plain; CLIMATE potential=VH. Formed a "dense sward" (Cunningham et al, 2003) where it invaded grassland in Victoria, however the forest canopy would be likely to reduce its density. Minor displacement of some dominant species in the groundcover layer.	**ML**	**H**
(c) low value EVC	EVC= Lowland Forest (LC); CMA=Glenelg Hopkins; Bioreg= Warrnambool Plain; CLIMATE potential=VH. Formed a "dense sward" (Cunningham et al, 2003) where it invaded grassland in Victoria, however the forest canopy would be likely to reduce its density. Minor displacement of some dominant species in the groundcover layer.	**ML**	**H**

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QUESTION	COMMENTS	RATING	CONFIDENCE
11. Impact on structure?	Formed a "dense sward" (Cunningham et al, 2003) where it invaded grassland in Victoria. It has the potential to have a major impact on ground flora. Its ability to affect the germination of flora from other strata is not known.	**MH**	**H**
12. Effect on threatened flora?	No Information found.	**MH**	**L**
Fauna			
13. Effect on threatened fauna?	No Information found.	**MH**	**L**
14. Effect on non-threatened fauna?	Has the potential to reduce the availability of ground flora as fodder (see Q. 11.) and is "resistant to grazing" so could reduce food sources where it invades, forcing some species to forage elsewhere.	**MH**	**MH**
15. Benefits fauna?	See Q.14- would provide little food for desirable species.	**MH**	**MH**
16. Injurious to fauna?	Despite its resemblance and close association to Chilean needle grass, the seeds on this grass are not sharp and barbed (see illustration CRC Weed Management, 2003). Not noted for toxicity.	**L**	**MH**
Pest Animal			
17. Food source to pests?	"Resistant to grazing" (CRC Weed Management, 2003) so not likely to provide a significant food source to pests.	**L**	**MH**
18. Provides harbor?	As a perennial that "forms dense tussocks to about 0.5m high," (CRC Weed Management, 2003) this grass may provide harbor for entrances to rabbit warrens.	**MH**	**MH**
Agriculture			
19. Impact yield?	In Argentina this plant is a dominant understorey to Chilean needle grass and serrated tussock (David Maclaren, pers. comm.) indicating that it has the potential to form a significant component of invaded grassland. As a grassland invader that is resistant to grazing (CRC Weed Management, 2003), this tussock may displace stock fodder, reducing the carrying capacity of the land. The degree of impact is unknown, so a medium value was chosen.	**M**	**L**

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QUESTION	COMMENTS	RATING	CONFIDENCE
20. Impact quality?	Despite its resemblance and close association to Chilean needle grass, the seeds on this grass are not sharp and barbed (see illustration CRC Weed Management, 2003), so it doesn't pose a meat contamination risk. The plant "will grow in crops" (CRC Weed Management, 2003) however, which may impact quality, however, again the degree of impact is unknown, so a medium value was chosen.	**M**	**L**
21. Affect land value?	Affect on land value will depend on level of infestation and ease of control, both of which are unknowns for this species.	**M**	**L**
22. Change land use?	Change in land use may occur if the carrying capacity of pasture is significantly reduced or if crop quality is too badly affected. Without any indication of the potential degree of impact, a medium value was chosen	**M**	**L**
23. Increase harvest costs?	Harvest costs may be increased if a large degree of weed control is necessary.	**M**	**L**
24. Disease host/vector?	Not known as a disease host or vector, however there is not much information about this species.	**L**	**L**

References cited:

CRC Weed Management 2003, *Weed Management Guide- Piptochaetium montevidense*- Uraguayan rice grass, CRC Weed Management, Australia.
Cunningham DC, Woldendorp G, Burgess MB & Barry SC 1993, *Prioritising sleeper weeds for eradication*, Bureau of rural sciences, Australia.
Albrecht D, Colville B, Entwisle T, Jones D, Lorimer G, Mattingley G & Weste G (eds.) 1991, *Flora of Melbourne*, Society for Growing Australian Plants Maroondah, inc.

Revisions

Date Revised by Revision