

Pest of the month

Purple Pampas (*Cortaderia jubata*)

Purple Pampas is a tall erect tussock-forming perennial grass which grows up to 3 metres high. The plant starts flowering in late January, producing fluffy creamy-purple flower heads on erect stems. This species was originally planted for shelter belts. It is capable of distributing seed over long distances and can establish in forest and shrub-land margins, domestic gardens and along roadsides.



This plant's ability to colonise disturbed land and dominate the site for many years makes it a serious long-term pest plant; it is included as a "containment" pest plant in the Pest Management Strategy to stop its spread. Landowners are required to destroy any plants on their land. Plants can be controlled by digging the root zone out of the ground or by spraying with a suitable grass herbicide like glyphosate (Roundup).

It differs from another pampas species, *Cortaderia selloana* that produces pink and cream-coloured flowers from mid-March onwards, two months after purple pampas. Purple pampas can be distinguished from the three native species of toetoe with their creamy-coloured flowers.

Further information on identification and control for your specific infestation can be obtained from a Biosecurity Officer (contact Lindsay Grueber, phone 03 543 8580). For further information on pest plant controls, visit the website www.weedbusters.org.nz