



Government
of South Australia

Declared Plant Policy

Gamba Grass (*Andropogon gayanus*)

Gamba grass is one of the thirty-two Weeds of National Significance, which are subject to a prohibition on sale in all States and Territories. It is a tropical grass not known to grow in South Australia.

In line with the national strategy, sale of gamba grass plants and seed is prohibited in South Australia as in other jurisdictions.

Management Plan for Gamba Grass

Outcomes

- Prevention of national trade in Weeds of National Significance

Objectives

- Prevent any supply of gamba grass, including movement as a produce contaminant, via South Australia to other States or Territories where it is an invasive weed.

Implementation

- Compliance action in the event of gamba grass being produced in South Australia for sale.
- Early detection capabilities preventing new infestations becoming established.

Regional Implementation

Refer to regional management plans for further details.

NRM Region	Actions
Adelaide and Mount Lofty Ranges	prohibit sale and movement
Alinytjara Wilurara	prohibit sale and movement
Eyre Peninsula	prohibit sale and movement
Kangaroo Island	prohibit sale and movement
Northern and Yorke	prohibit sale and movement
South Australian Arid Lands	prohibit sale and movement
South Australian Murray-Darling Basin	prohibit sale and movement
South East	prohibit sale and movement

Declaration

To implement this policy, gamba grass is declared under the *Natural Resources Management Act, 2004* throughout the whole of the State of South Australia. The movement or transport of the plant on a public road by itself or as a contaminant, its entry to South Australia, or the sale by itself or as a contaminant are prohibited.

Gamba Grass policy

Gamba grass is declared in category 2 under the Act for the purpose of setting maximum penalties and for other purposes. Any permit to allow its movement or sale can only be issued by the Chief Officer pursuant to section 188. Under the *Natural Resources Management (General) Regulations 2005*, the transport or movement of grain for milling or wool for cleaning is exempt from the operation of sections 175 and the sale of wool or grain is exempt from section 177(2) if at the time of the sale the person believes on reasonable grounds that the purchaser will remove the plant from the wool or grain before any re-sale.

The following sections of the Act apply to gamba grass throughout each of the NRM regions noted below:

Sections of Act	Region							
	AMLR	AW	EP	KI	NY	SAAL	SAMDB	SE
175(1) Prohibiting entry to area	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
175(2) Prohibiting movement on public roads	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
177(1) Prohibiting sale of the plant	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
177(2) Prohibiting sale of contaminated goods	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
180 Requiring notification of infestations								
182(1) Landowners to destroy the plant on their properties								
182(2) Landowners to control the plant on their properties								
182(3) Landowners to comply with regulations or instructions								
185 Recovery of control costs on adjoining road reserves								

Review

This policy is to be reviewed by 2020, or in the event of a change in its status as a Weed of National Significance.

Weed Risk

Invasiveness

Gamba grass spreads by seeds, which are produced from the second year of its life. Mature plants can produce between 15,000 and 244,000 seeds. Most seed falls within 5 metres of the parent plant and less than 1% falls more than 10m away. On occasion seeds may be dispersed long distances by wind, floodwaters, animals, contaminated machinery and hay. Streams are important spread corridors into remote locations and transport corridors also allow dispersal.

Germination occurs from early wet season storms in October to the usual commencement of the wet season in December. Plants which have been burnt or slashed earlier in the year can commence growth before the monsoon on their underground reserves.

Impacts

Can become the dominant grass species in wet tropical savannahs. Infestations replace native pastures and cause a decline in the diversity and abundance of native fauna and flora directly through competition and indirectly through increased fire intensity. When not intensively managed, fire risk from gamba grass also poses a major threat to infrastructure and culturally important sites.

Gamba Grass policy

Potential distribution

Gamba grass is not known to grow outside the tropics. While it can persist with around 400 mm annual rainfall, it prefers 750-1500 mm annual rainfall for growth.

Feasibility of Containment

Control costs

Control is by herbicides or burning. This may not be economic in many parts of tropical Australia due to their remoteness. Prevention of spread is recognised as the most effective way to manage gamba grass.

Persistence

Gamba grass persists by perennial growth. It also regenerates after burning or clearing by seed. It high seed production forms seed banks of 600 – 3,500 seeds per square metre although seed longevity is short, with rapid decline in viability over the dry season and very low seed survival after 12 months.

Current distribution

Not present in South Australia. Naturalised in the Northern Territory Top End, Western Australian Kimberley region and the Cape York, Atherton Tablelands and coastal areas of North Queensland.

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:

Land use	Weed Risk	Feasibility of control	Response at State Level
Irrigated pastures	negligible 0	very high 0	monitor
Aquatic	negligible 0	very high 0	monitor
Native vegetation	negligible 0	very high 0	monitor

Considerations

Gamba grass is one of the Weeds of National Significance, which are subject to a uniform prohibition on sale in all jurisdictions as agreed by the Natural Resource Management Ministerial Council. In line with the draft national strategy on gamba grass, sale of the plant and its seed is prohibited in South Australia as in other jurisdictions.

Gamba grass was introduced to Australia as a pasture plant for the tropics in the 1930s and is still maintained for this purpose in northern Australia. There is no demand for gamba grass plants in South Australia, and prohibiting its sale it does not inconvenience the nursery trade. It is declared under the *Natural Resources Management Act 2004* in compliance with the draft national strategic plan.

Synonymy

Andropogon gayanus Kunth, Révis. Gramin. 1: 163 (1829).

Nomenclatural synonym:

Sorghum gayanum (Kunth) Kuntze, Revis. Gen. Pl. 2: 791 (1891).

Taxonomic synonyms:

Andropogon guineensis Schumach., Beskr. Guin. Pl. 51 (1827).

Andropogon reconditus Steud., Syn. Pl. Glumac. 1: 386 (1854).

References

Natural Resource Management Ministerial Council (2012) 'Weeds of National Significance Gamba Grass (*Andropogon gayanus*) Draft Strategic Plan'. (Australian Weeds Committee: Canberra).

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Conservation

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