



## Declared Plant Policy

*This policy relates to natural resources management under section 9(1)(d) of the Landscape South Australia Act 2019 (the Act), enabling co-ordinated implementation and promotion of sound management programs and practices for the use, development or protection of natural resources of the State. Specifically, this policy provides guidance on the use and management of natural resources relating to the prevention or control of impacts caused by pest species of plants that may have an adverse effect on the environment, primary production or the community, as per object s7(1)(f) of the Act.*

### African lovegrass (*Eragrostis curvula*)

African lovegrass is a perennial tussock grass that has low palatability and can encroach on pastures. It is scattered in the agricultural zone of South Australia.

#### Management Plan for African Lovegrass

##### Outcomes

- Perennial pastures in medium to high rainfall areas protected from invasion by African lovegrass.

##### Objectives

- New African lovegrass incursions in clean areas controlled.
- Seed production and spread from established large infestations minimised.

##### Best Practice Implementation

- Regional landscape boards and Green Adelaide to ensure high priority infestations, as determined by the authority, on public or private land are controlled.
- Regional landscape boards and Green Adelaide to control high priority infestations on road reserves, and recover costs from adjoining landholders.

##### Regional Implementation

Refer to regional management plans for further details.

Region	Actions
Alinytjara Wilurara	Contain spread
Eyre Peninsula	Destroy infestations
Green Adelaide	Contain spread
Hills and Fleurieu	Contain spread
Kangaroo Island	Contain spread – regional alert
Limestone Coast	Contain spread
Murraylands and Riverland	Protect sites
Northern and Yorke	Protect sites
South Australian Arid Lands	Limited action

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### Declaration

To implement this policy, African lovegrass is declared under the *Landscape South Australia Act 2019* throughout the whole of the State of South Australia. Its movement or transport on a public road by itself or as a contaminant, or sale by itself or as a contaminant are prohibited. Regional landscape boards and Green Adelaide may require land owners to control African lovegrass plants growing on their land. Regional landscape boards and Green Adelaide are required to control plants on road reserves, and may recover costs from the adjoining land owners.

African lovegrass is declared in category 3 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 regional landscape boards and Green Adelaide pursuant to section 197.

Under the *Landscape South Australia (General) Regulations 2020*, Regulation 27 specifies the conditions under which a person is exempt from the operation of section 186 and may transport wool, grain or other produce or goods carrying African lovegrass on public roads. Regulation 28 specifies conditions under which a person is exempt from the operation of section 188(2) and may sell wool, grain or other produce or goods carrying African lovegrass. Note that certain produce or goods may be excluded from these general movement and sale exemptions by Gazettal Notice of the Chief Executive of the Department for Environment and Water.

The following sections of the Act apply to African lovegrass throughout each of the regions noted below:

Sections of Act	Region								
	AW	EP	GA	HF	KI	LC	MR	NY	SAAL
186(1) Prohibiting entry to area									
186(2) Prohibiting movement on public roads	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
188(1) Prohibiting sale of the plant	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
188(2) Prohibiting sale of contaminated goods	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
190 Requiring notification of presence									
192(1) Landowners to destroy the plant on their properties									
192(2) Landowners to control the plant on their properties	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
194 Recovery of control costs on adjoining road reserves	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X

One cultivar of African lovegrass, *Eragrostis curvula* 'Consol', is excluded from this declaration.

### Review

This policy is to be reviewed by 2025, or in the event of a change in one or more regional management plans for African lovegrass.

### Weed Risk

#### Invasiveness

African lovegrass produces very large numbers of tiny seeds; most strains do not require pollination, forming seeds that are identical to the parent.

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Seeds are dispersed in hay, on livestock and on vehicles. As the seedlings are tiny, they are only likely to establish when conditions are favourable

In Australia, African lovegrass appears to prefer disturbed sites, especially roadsides and pastures that have been overgrazed for some time. It is generally associated with light textured (sandy) soil types, especially granitic sands, and is often abundant along sandy riverbanks and beach dunes. In some places, it grows on fertile, acidic red soils.

African lovegrass often becomes abundant where there is a lack of competition from other pasture plants, and its range extends across subtropical and temperate areas where annual rainfall is 400–1000 mm.

### Impacts

African lovegrass can spread and dominate sparse overgrazed pastures forming pure, dense swards. The weedy forms have low palatability and will therefore tend to increase in abundance under grazing. It is not a weed of annual pastures or cropping but may invade degraded native vegetation such as road reserves.

The plant is mainly found in disturbed soils on roadsides, railway tracks, river banks and other neglected sites. It grows from 30 to 120 cm high, and therefore presents a low nuisance value to humans and is unlikely to restrict access to land.

In New South Wales some cultivars are promoted for soil stabilisation purposes, but African lovegrass can also pose a fire threat in some environments.

In arable areas, cultivation and cropping or the establishment of perennial pasture gives good control of African lovegrass. The weed is unlikely to have a significant impact in well-managed paddocks. There is no evidence that the weed causes contamination of grass seed crops, however the movement of pasture hay is a known vector for spread.

Although African lovegrass is seen mainly as a weed of weed of disturbed neglected areas, it can also be highly invasive in heathlands, woodlands, forests, grasslands and riverine environments and is capable of dominating ground flora causing major displacement of native species.

African lovegrass is highly persistent, dominant, and largely unpalatable to native animals and therefore may have a minor negative impact on food sources for non-threatened fauna.

### Potential distribution

African lovegrass invades permanent pastures receiving at least 450 mm annual rainfall. It is prominent on acid sandy soils but occurs in a wide soil pH range from 4.5 to 8.5. As it is already present in marginal country on the West Coast, it may be expected to grow anywhere in the agricultural zone of South Australia.

## **Feasibility of Containment**

### Control costs

African lovegrass is difficult to destroy with herbicides but non-selective herbicides can be used on roadsides and spot infestations. Control in pasture depends on management of grazing pressures and appropriate use of herbicides.

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### Persistence

African lovegrass is a highly persistent summer growing tussock grass. The young growth, before production of seed heads, is generally palatable and nutritious to stock, but is produced at times when feed is generally available from more palatable species. Older growth has low palatability and is avoided by animals and eaten only when other pasture has been consumed.

African lovegrass can develop a large soil seed bank, but individual seeds are short-lived, remaining viable for one to five years.

### Current distribution

African lovegrass is scattered in parts of the Eyre Peninsula, Yorke Peninsula, southern Mount Lofty Ranges, Fleurieu Peninsula, Murray Mallee and Upper Limestone Coast. It is most abundant on cleared roadsides along major highways such as sections of the Dukes Highway, the Eyre Highway and on roadsides in the southern Mount Lofty Ranges.

### **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:

<b>Land use</b>	<b>Weed Risk</b>	<b>Feasibility of control</b>	<b>Response at State Level</b>
Grazing - southern	medium 59	medium 11	manage sites
Native vegetation	low 20	medium 51	limited action
Crop-pasture rotation	low 17	medium 40	limited action

### **Considerations**

African lovegrass was introduced around 1918 as a seed contaminant and also planted as a pasture species in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Its characteristics of high seed production, vigorous seedling growth and drought tolerance are desirable in a pasture plant, but the low palatability of some strains makes them weedy. It was noted as spreading in the late 1970s in the Tintinara-Coonalpyn area, and in 1985 was declared an agricultural pest plant for the whole of South Australia under the *Pest Plants Act 1975*.

African lovegrass is far from reaching its ecological limit. It is an undesirable pasture plant and although some cultivars may be beneficial for soil conservation purposes, the weedy forms established in SA are aggressive competitors with other perennial pasture grasses.

Risk assessment indicates managing sites as an 'average' action across the whole State to protect grazing lands from African lovegrass, as a species with medium risk that is already widely dispersed; in practice this is implemented according to the level of infestation in each region.

As African lovegrass is absent from Kangaroo Island, this Board aims to contain spread by preventing its entry or establishment. Hills and Fleurieu contains spread by prioritising sites for destruction, or reduction of weed infestations. In the Murraylands and Riverland, prioritised non-arable grazing and roadside sites are protected, and larger established

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infestations are managed. Spread is contained to a designated northern zone of the Limestone Coast region by enforced control in the rest of region. The Alinytjara Wilurara and South Australian Arid Lands regions do not have habitats or land uses vulnerable to invasion by African lovegrass.

### Synonymy

*Eragrostis curvula* (Schrader)Nees, Fl. Afr. Aust. 1: 397 (1841)

Basionym: *Poa curvula* Schrader, Gött. Anz. Ges. Wiss. 3: 2073 (1821)

Taxonomic synonyms:

*Eragrostis capillifolia* Nees, Fl. Afr. Austral. III. 403 (1841)

*Eragrostis chloromelas* Steudel, Syn. Pl. Glum., 1: 271 (1854)

*Eragrostis jeffreysii* Hack., Proc. Rhodesia Sci. Assoc. 7(2): 68 (1908)

*Eragrostis procerior* Rendle, Cat. Afr. Pl. (Hiern) 2: 235 (1899)

*Eragrostis robusta* Stent, Bothalia 2: 288 (1927)

*Eragrostis subulata* Nees, Fl. Afr. Austral. III. 399 (1841)

*Eragrostis thunbergiana* Steud., Nomencl. Bot. [Steudel], ed. 2. 1: 564 (1840)

*Poa capensis* Steudel, Flora 12: 488 (1829)

*Poa filiformis* Thunb., Prodr. Pl. Cap. 21 (1794)

Other common names include bergsoetgras, Boer lovegrass, fyngras and weeping lovegrass.

*Eragrostis curvula* includes several varieties such as *Eragrostis curvula* var. *conferta* Nees.

Hon David Speirs MP  
**Minister for Environment and Water**

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