

weeds of national significance

# BEWARE

# have you seen this weed?

## CHILEAN NEEDLE GRASS - *Nassella neesiana*

### WHAT IS IT?

Chilean needle grass (*Nassella neesiana*) is a perennial tussock-forming grass, native to South America that is established across New South Wales, Victoria, ACT and more recently in South Australia, Queensland and Tasmania.

A Weed of National Significance (WoNS) in Australia, Chilean needle grass is most easily recognised during spring when it produces a distinctive purple seed that has a characteristic nodding habit.

### WHAT'S THE PROBLEM?

Chilean needle grass can have a devastating impact on agriculture. It can severely reduce pasture productivity, contaminate crops and hay and the needle-like seed can injure pets or stock. Sheep pose a particular problem as seed can burrow into their fleece and skin and is a major cause of wool and carcass downgrading.

Chilean needle grass is considered one of the worst environmental weeds as it is highly invasive in native grasslands, of which less than 1% remains. It invades parklands and gardens and is a significant riparian weed along creeks and rivers.

It is spread by the movement of its seed on humans, animals, vehicles, machinery and equipment, particularly along roadsides.

### WHAT SHOULD I DO?

New or small infestations need to be controlled immediately. Caution should be taken to reduce seed spread. Contact your local authority should you suspect you have Chilean needle grass. Find further information on identification and management at [www.weeds.org.au/WoNS/Chileanneedlegrass/](http://www.weeds.org.au/WoNS/Chileanneedlegrass/) and in the National Chilean needle grass Best Practice Manual.



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Chilean needle grass tussocks (top left) before distinctive 'nodding' purple seed head emerges to aid identification (above and top right).



Chilean needle grass is highly invasive in native grasslands, is a problem in urban parklands and a major roadside weed (photos left to right: Sue Hadden DSE Victoria, DPI Victoria, John Laing)



Chilean needle grass seed contaminates and is spread easily on machinery and livestock (photos Charles Grech DPI Victoria)