

Invasive plants and animals

Broad-leaved paspalum

Paspalum mandiocanu



Photos courtesy Brian Phillips

The problem

Broad-leaved paspalum is an unpalatable, introduced grass which invades cattle and horse pastures by out-competing and replacing palatable native pasture species.

It can out-compete the native pasture grasses because it is a hardy, adaptable plant.

It tolerates both dense shade and drought conditions, grows quickly (particularly after rainfall), smothers less competitive grasses by spreading horizontally, produces a large number of seeds and has a high rate of germination.

Description

Leaves

- Mature leaves are more than 10 mm wide, bright green, have a crinkled margin and a tendency to spread.
- The lower section (70–100 mm) of leaf is usually maroon, burgundy or brown.

Flowers

- Flower stems can be over 1 m tall with up to 10 flower/seed stalks growing alternately down the stem.
- Ripe seed heads hang at about 45° if the stem is upright.

Tussocks

- Individual tussocks can grow to 1 m wide and easily spread sideways, as the stems contacting with the soil will form roots.
- Tussocks have a high degree of tolerance to mowing.

Habitat and distribution

Plants grow in open pasture, along roadside verges, in bush margins but also in deeply-shaded sections of forest.

- 2002 – first discovered in cattle paddocks on the Atherton Tablelands
- 2004 – reported in horticultural properties around Bellthorpe and Booroobin
- 2004 onwards – reported growing on roadsides around the Blackall Range region.

Control

For small plants or small infestations

Seedlings and smaller plants can be hand-pulled, bagged and composted or disposed of at the local garbage dump.

Wear gloves, as the leaves and seed heads can cause skin irritation

For larger infestations

Chemical control, such as foliar spray, may be required for larger infestations of broad-leaved paspalum.

In this case, we recommend using a glyphosate 360 g/L herbicide (e.g. Weedmaster Duo®) at a rate of 10 ml per 1 L of water.

Take care however, as the herbicides will damage other plants (not broad-leaved paspalum) if they are accidentally sprayed.

Spray in spring when the plants are actively growing.

Declaration details

Broad-leaved paspalum is not declared under the *Land Protection (Pest and Stock Route Management) Act 2002*, however, plants that are not declared under state legislation may have control requirements imposed by local governments.

Further information

Further information is available from the vegetation management/weed control/environmental staff at your local government.