

Rhodes grass

Chloris gayana



The problem

Rhodes grass is a native of south and east Africa and is now widely grown in tropical countries as a pasture species. Its wide tolerance of a range of conditions and its ability to rapidly invade areas such as rainforest fringes makes it a known weed of environmental areas in south-east Queensland. Rhodes grass produces 3–4 million seeds per kilogram and can reproduce by a number of methods to smother native ground cover species and form almost pure stands.

Description

Chloris gayana is a perennial or annual grass ranging from 60 to 160 cm tall. It forms strong bunch type stools with runners that rapidly cover the ground surface. Rhodes grass spreads by rhizomes, rooting stolons and seeds. Leaf blades are flat or folded and are 12.5–45 cm long and 1–2 cm wide. Inflorescences consist of 6–15 one sided spikes that are clustered at the end of the stem. Spikes are 5–10 cm long with numerous spikelets that are green when immature turning to copper-brown at maturity.

Rhodes grass is suitable to tropical and subtropical areas with rainfall ranging from 600–1600 mm annually. It is relatively drought and salt tolerant.

Management strategies

There are many different *Chloris* species. *Chloris gayana* (Rhodes grass) should not be confused with *Chloris virgata* and several native *Chloris* species.

Manual control of Rhodes grass may require the digging out of larger clumps with a mattock or similar tool. It is susceptible to several herbicides.

Declaration details

Rhodes grass is not a declared plant 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.

TABLE 1 – HERBICIDES REGISTERED FOR THE CONTROL OF RHODES GRASS

Method	Herbicide	Rate	Registration status	Comments
Foliar spray	glyphosate (360 g/L)	6 L per ha	Registered	Plants need to be at early head stage
Handgun	glyphosate (360 g/L)	1 L per 100 L water	Registered	Plants need to be at early head stage
Foliar spray	diuron (500 g/L)	3.5 L per ha	Registered	Apply as a pre-emergent

Note: Neither of these herbicides are selective in environmental areas. Read the label carefully before use and always use the herbicide in accordance with the directions on the label.