



Cenchrus setaceus (Forssk.) Morrone, Fountaingrass, Poaceae

Synonyms: *Pennisetum ruppelii* Steud., *Pennisetum setaceum* (Forssk.) Chiov., *Phalaris setacea* Forssk. (other synonyms at https://www.itis.gov/servlet/SingleRpt/SingleRpt?search_topic=TSN&search_value=796732#null)



Fountaingrass habit. Forest and Kim Starr, Starr Environmental, Bugwood.org.

Species Description & Habitat

Species Description

Fountaingrass is a perennial clump-forming grass. Leaves are slender and up to 0.6 m long. Flowers and seeds are in dense, cylindrical, bristly panicles on stalks up to 1.2 m in height. Leaf sheaths are usually smooth but often have edges lined with white hairs. Seed heads are pink to purple but can also be light green to tan or light buff in color. The leaves and seed heads form a spray from the base of the plant giving it the name fountaingrass.

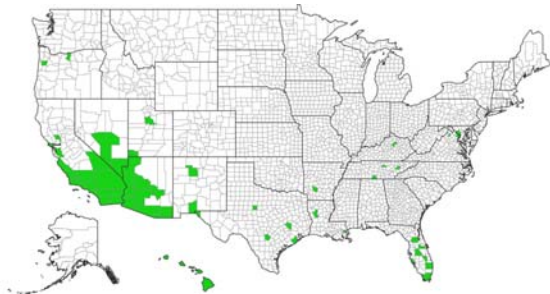
Habitat

This species is generally found in arid to semi-arid environments but also in mesic sites. It grows in disturbed areas like roadsides, railroad embankments, and mined areas. In the southwestern US and northern Mexico it has been found in grasslands, desert, desert shrublands, canyons, rocky hillsides, coastal dunes, coastal sage scrub, and

Introduction and Impact

Fountaingrass is native to North Africa and the Middle East. Seed was first available in the US around 1880 and it has been cultivated as an ornamental plant in Tucson since 1940.

Fountaingrass is a prolific seed producer that spreads rapidly from cultivation into nearby disturbed areas, and eventually into natural habitats. It often forms dense stands and aggressively competes with native species, especially perennial grasses and seasonal annuals, for space, water, and nutrients. It provides fuel through its thatch, is well adapted to fire, and increases fires in systems not adapted to them.



States where fountaingrass occurs. EDDMapS. 2018. Early Detection & Distribution Mapping System. The University of Georgia - Center for Invasive Species and Ecosystem Health. Available online at <http://www.eddmaps.org/>; last accessed May 26, 2018.

Distribution in Introduced Range

In the United States, fountaingrass is found in Arizona, California, Colorado, Florida, Hawaii, Louisiana, Puerto Rico, New Mexico, Oregon, and Tennessee.

Other areas where this species has been introduced includes the Philippines, Namibia, the Canary Islands, Swaziland, Bermuda, Mexico, Guadeloupe, Venezuela, Portugal, Spain, Australia, New Zealand, Fiji, French Polynesia, Guam, Micronesia, New Caledonia, and Palau.



Fountaingrass inflorescences. Lesley Ingram, Bugwood.org.



Fountaingrass infestation. John M. Randall, The Nature Conservancy, Bugwood.org.

Control and Management

Manual and mechanical and chemical control methods are effective for controlling fountaingrass. The entire plant must be removed. Seedlings and small plants can be easily pulled. Chemical treatments with systemic herbicides, such as herbicides containing fluazifop, quizalofop, sethoxydim, fenoxaprop, hexazinone, and glyphosate, have been used to control fountaingrass and are effective in controlling large infestations.

Regulatory Status

This species is listed as a noxious weed in Hawaii.

References and Resources

Arizona Desert Museum. Bufflegrass. (http://www.desertmuseum.org/invaders/invaders_fountaingrass.php). Updated 2018. Accessed 26 May 2018.

Centre for Agriculture and Bioscience International (CABI), Invasive Species Compendium. *Cenchrus setaceus* (fountaingrass) Datasheet (<https://www.cabi.org/isc/datasheet/116202>). Copyright 2018. Accessed 26 May 2018.

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