Pennisetum setaceum
Poaceae
Crimson fountaingrass

Impact risk level

Key characteristics

growth: Sparsely branching, tufted perennial grass 0.2-1 m high.
stems: Densely clumped growth form and erect stems.
leaves: Mostly basal, up to 40 mm long x 3 mm wide, not rigid or ending in sharp points. Edges of leaves have minute teeth, which catch when brushed backwards.
Inflorescence: Feathery (bristly), spike-like inflorescences; the bristles long and detaching with the spikelets. Cylindrical, 100-250 mm long or more, usually purple or rose-colored, bristles about 20 mm long.

fruit: Fruits are small, dry achenes adorned with long showy bristles.
Ecotypes Invaded:
Desertlands, grasslands, riparian & woodlands

Elevation:
Approx up to 4800 feet

ECOLOGY & DISTRIBUTION

Although found in a wide elevation range, fountain grass is limited to areas with annual rainfall of less than 50 inches. In the SW United States, fountain grass invades grasslands, deserts, canyons and roadsides. It has been introduced in Pima County as an ornamental grass along medians of roadways. From here, it can spread out into the natural environment over great distances by wind, water, vehicles, livestock or humans. Its ability to spread quickly and change fire regimes makes it a potential threat to native species such as the velvet mesquite (Prosopis velutina) and the saguaro cactus (Carnegiea giganteus).

SUITABLE HABITAT