

Gamba grass

Andropogon gayanus

Case Study - December 2016



Gamba grass (*Andropogon gayanus*) is a perennial grass introduced to Australia as a pasture grass, and it was hailed a great success by pastoralists in providing feed for cattle. It came into Australia in the early twentieth century from Zaria in Nigeria, and from Africa via Brazil.

Plant description:

- an erect, tussock-forming perennial grass to 4m high
- stems are robust, often hairy
- leaf blades hairy with a prominent white mid rib
- flower heads are on thick stems held well above leaves, consisting of loosely branched, hairy spikelets, giving a fluffy appearance
- flowers and fruits mainly April to August

Gamba grass can be found in areas:

- along creek lines, flood plain fringes, degraded areas, roadsides and pastures
- eucalyptus savanna in areas where rainfall is over 600mm per year

Although gamba grass can be a beneficial pasture plant on pastoral properties, it is difficult to manage and easily spread by:

- pasture seed, turf, soil, farm produce
- wind
- animals, birds, humans
- machinery, equipment vehicles, four wheelers, 4WD vehicles, and motorbikes

Gamba grass is highly invasive and threatens the integrity of natural ecosystems. The main problem is that it takes over from natural vegetation and as it surrounds native trees gamba grass becomes a major fire hazard, burning fifteen times hotter than native grasses. As a result, a fire in gamba grass kills more trees than would be killed in a fire in a native forest.

The Queensland Government has provided Cape York NRM with funding through

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the Department of Natural Resources and Mines, Queensland Regional Natural Resource Management Investment Program, to contain and reduce the further spread of 50 Ha of established gamba grass at Naprunum and Injinoo.

Cape York NRM is supporting the Northern Peninsula Area Regional Council's Apudthama Land & Sea Rangers to carry out work requiring the Rangers from the Injinoo Ranger Base to implement gamba grass control activities over the 50 Ha area in 2017.

The support is provided in the form of equipment and chemicals which will improve the Rangers ability to maintain vigilance and treat areas on a regular basis.



Under Queensland's Land Protection (Pest and Stock Route Management) Act 2002 gamba grass is a declared Class 2 pest - land managers must take reasonable steps to keep land free of the species and it is an offence to introduce, keep or supply the species without a permit.

In 2012 Gamba grass was declared a Weed of National Significance.

Photos in this fact sheet have be sourced from photos provided for the Cape York Peninsula Weed Pocket Guide 2015



CONTACT US:

47-49 Maunds Road | PO Box 907

Atherton QLD 4883 | 1300 132 262

admin@capeyorknrm.com.au

www.capeyorknrm.com.au