



Whatcom Weeds

Whatcom County Noxious Weed Control Board 322 N. Commercial St. Bellingham WA 98225
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PAMPAS GRASS

Cortaderia selloana

THREAT: Pampas grass, a native of South America, was introduced into North America in the mid 1800s, as an ornamental. It was subsequently also planted for use in erosion control and as a forage plant. Pampas grass has escaped cultivation, invading highway and other right-of-ways, open areas and disturbed areas, and will grow on a wide variety of soil types. Pampas grass competes with native species and can become a fire hazard. Additionally, the sharp-edged leaf can inhibit recreational uses of invaded areas. Pampas grass and the similar looking jubata grass (*Cortaderia jubata*) have become a major problem in California, invading large areas of coastal habitat, as well as cutover forestry lands. Pampas grass spreads by seed and by plant fragments.



While it is not a listed noxious weed in Washington State, it has been placed on the non-regulatory State Monitor List because it has been observed escaping from landscape plantings. Its invasive nature should be considered when choosing plants for your landscape.

DESCRIPTION: Pampas grass is a large perennial grass that can grow up to 13 feet tall. Pampas grass grows in a clump, or tussock. The leaves, which grow up to 6 feet long, are folded at the mid-vein and are gray-green or bluish-green in color. The flowers are produced in long (1-4 foot), silver to white plumes at the end of stalks. Pampas grass flowers in August and September. The female plants produce showier flowers, so the nursery industry has selected more for these plants. However, male plants are also produced in some areas, allowing viable seed to be produced. New plants can also develop from root fragments. Once established, the root system of pampas grass can reach up to 13 feet in diameter and 11 feet deep, and plants can live for 15 years.

MANAGEMENT OPTIONS: Pampas grass can be controlled using mechanical and chemical control. Small infestations can be controlled by hand digging and pulling, but care must be taken to remove the entire crown and top section of roots. Material should be removed from the site to prevent any from re-rooting. Herbicides, or a combination of cutting followed by an herbicide application, can also be used to control pampas grass. Contact the weed control board for chemical recommendations.



Pampas/jubata grass infestation in California. Photo courtesy of Sharon Beals--Shelterbelt Builders Inc.