

# Serrated tussock (*Nassella trichotoma*)

## Weed management guide

Weed type  
**Grass**

November 2022

[www.lls.nsw.gov.au/regions/central-west](http://www.lls.nsw.gov.au/regions/central-west)



In NSW, weeds are regulated by the NSW Biosecurity Act, 2015. All land managers have a General Biosecurity Duty to contain the spread of weeds.

*“General Biosecurity Duty means that any person dealing with plant matter must take measures to prevent, minimise or eliminate the biosecurity risk (as far as is reasonably practicable).”*

The Regional priority for Serrated tussock is to protect assets from the weed’s impacts and to prevent its arrival and establishment in the region. In order to achieve this, Land Managers are asked to: **Whole region:** *The plant should not be bought, sold, grown, carried or released into the environment. Exclusion zone:* *The plant should be eradicated, and eradication maintained. Mitigate the risk of new weeds being introduced to their land. Core infestation area:* *Reduce impacts to priority assets and mitigate risks if introduction.*

For further information, contact your local Biosecurity (Weeds) Officer via Central West Local Land Services or visit NSW WeedWise.

NSW WeedWise



# Habit and description

Serrated tussock is a tussock-forming perennial native to South America. It can grow to 60cm tall and 15cm wide with a deep and fibrous root system. Leaf blades are tightly rolled, thin and rough with small serrations. It has a characteristic ligule which is white, hairless, and around 1mm long. Seeds have relatively small, straight, or double bent awn firmly fixed to seed. Seed surrounded by dark purple glumes. Spring to summer flowering.



Photo: © Birdgitte Verbeek | NSW DPI



Photo: © Linda Ayres | NSW DPI



Photo: © Julia Scher | NSW DPI



Photo: © Warwick Badgery

# Reproduction and spread

Seeds of Serrated tussock are light and can readily spread long distances via water and wind. Mature seed heads can break off whole and be blown by winds up to 10km away. Seeds can also be spread by attaching to animals, machinery, and clothes. Seed can remain viable after being digested by animals.

## Impacts

### Agriculture



- Not palatable to livestock and is nutrient poor.
- Stock forced to feed off of Serrated tussock may die of malnutrition.
- Infest and take over pastures.
- Reduces pasture quality.
- Can contaminate feedstock.

### Native vegetation



- Serrated tussock is a Weed of National Significance (WoNS) in Australia (NSW Department of Primary Industries, 2017.)
- It can outcompete native vegetation and take over whole areas within 4 years.
- Hard to control due to similarities with native species.
- Often unnoticed for some time.

## Management

### Chemical



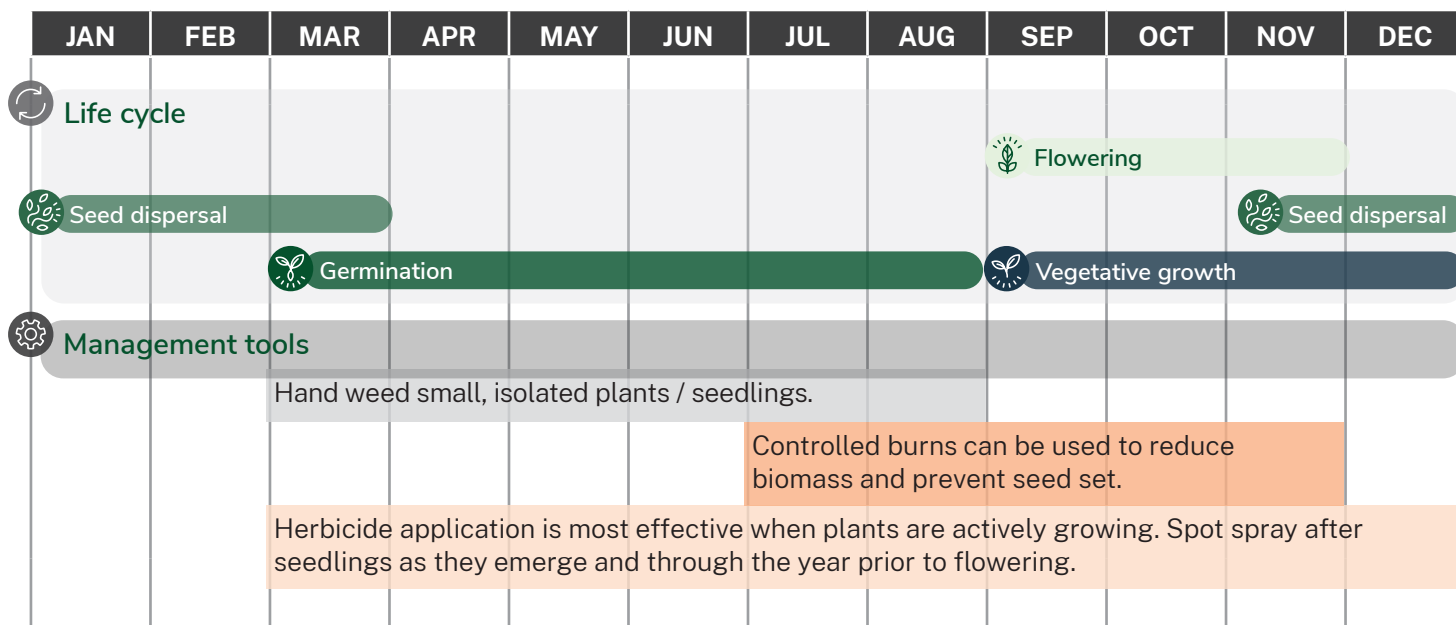
- Spot spray isolated plants or small patches year-round prior to seed set.
- Large infestations can be sprayed with a boom spray.
- Seek the guidance of an experienced Weeds Officer for expert advice on herbicide use.
- Visit [www.apvma.gov.au](http://www.apvma.gov.au) for a list of registered products, product labels and permit requirements.
- NSW DPI (2021) provides a list of recommended herbicides for the control of Serrated tussock at <https://weeds.dpi.nsw.gov.au/Weeds/SerratedTussock>.

### Non-chemical



- Prevention is the most effective control method.
- Using a mattock can be effective for removing isolated plants. Plant material should be bagged and disposed of correctly.
- Any tussocks in flower should be burnt after removal to kill seed.
- Fire can be used to reduce biomass.

# Management calendar



Optimal control options may vary depending on your location and climate. Consult an experienced Weeds Officer based in your local government area for control methods suited to your conditions.

All herbicides must be used in accordance with the herbicide label and permit requirements.

## Further information

For more information on your general biosecurity duties, visit [www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/biosecurity](http://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/biosecurity).

For the best guidance on how to meet this duty on your property, contact your expert Weeds Officer at your local council or via Local Land Services [www.lls.nsw.gov.au/regions/central-west](http://www.lls.nsw.gov.au/regions/central-west).

NSW WeedWise



## References

NSW DPI. (2017). *Weed categories*. <https://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/biosecurity/weeds/weed-categories>

NSW DPI. (2021). *NSW WeedWise*. <https://weeds.dpi.nsw.gov.au/Weeds/SerratedTussock>



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