

Ravenna grass (*Saccharum ravennae*)



Photo credit: J.M. DiTomaso



Photo credit: J.M. DiTomaso



Photo Credit: L.J. Mehrhoff

Key ID Tips

- Base of the leaf blades are covered in dense, long hairs that hide the ligule.
- Inflorescence are large feathery plumes 2 ft in length.
- Stems and leaves can be 12 feet tall.

Origin

Native to Eurasia

Description

Ravennagrass is a large tufted perennial bunchgrass, that can produce flowering stems up to 12 feet tall.

Leaves are similar to pampasgrass, but are covered in dense hairs at the base, effectively hiding the ligule. Inflorescence are in large feathery panicles that can be 2 feet long and can appear purplish-brown to silvery-gray. Seeds are tiny and numerous. Roots form rhizomes that facilitate vegetative spread.



Photo credit: Daderot

Biology

Ravenna grass was originally planted as an ornamental and is still sold in some nurseries. It can grow quickly, and prefers wet sites in riparian habitats and wetlands and disturbed sites. It forms dense tufts that expand quickly over time and crowd out native vegetation. Seeds can be transported by wind or water, allowing them to establish in downstream sites.

Locations

Ravenna grass has been detected on the Hopi Reservation and in Grand Canyon National Park.

Ecological Threat and Management Concerns

Ravenna grass forms dense stands quickly, crowding out native vegetation. It can alter riparian habitat and is a concern for several sensitive plant and animal species. Established stands can also increase fire risk in riparian soils and prevent erosion, which can increase incisions along river channels (PDCNR 2013).

Ravenna grass (*Saccharum ravennae*)

Additional safety measures and limitations may apply to each method. Refer to the [Navajo Nation Integrated Weed Management Plan](#) for more information.

Mechanical/Manual Removal

Manual removal should remove all root and root fragments. They are most effective when plants are young. For larger plants, tilling or using a mattock or hoe can remove clumps. The top section of the roots needs to be removed to prevent resprouting. Collect and incinerate all removed plant parts to prevent seed dispersal from removed material, especially inflorescence.

Biological

No biological control organisms are available for use on the Navajo Nation.

Cultural Control

Because of their proximity to open water, grazing is not recommended. Burning is also not recommended or effective as it can stimulate resprouting and does not remove underground structures.

Chemical

Use of herbicides can be effective. Refer to the product labels for application rates, timing, and approved application methods.

Recommended herbicides include:

- Glyphosate

References

DiTomaso, J.M., G.B. Kyser et al. 2013. *Weed Control in Natural Areas in the Western United States*. Weed Research and Information Center. University of California. 544 pp.

Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (PDCNR). 2013. Invasive Plants of Pennsylvania: Ravenna Grass. 2 pages.

USDA, NRCS. 2023. PLANTS Database. Available at <https://plants.sc.egov.usda.gov/>. National Plant Data Team, Greensboro, NC 27401-4901 USA



Bureau of Indian Affairs
 Navajo Region
 301 West Hill Street
 Gallup, NM 87301
 Phone: (505) 863-8314
www.bia.gov/regional-offices/Navajo-region