



1. Tufted habit of Brunswick grass. 2. Immature seeds in four uneven rows on seed-head branches. 3. Bluish-green leaves. 4. Brunswick grass being grown as a soil stabiliser.



## Brunswick grass (*Paspalum nicorae*)

Introduced

Not Declared

Brunswick Grass is a long-lived clumping grass native to some parts of South America (i.e. southern Brazil, Paraguay, Uruguay and northern Argentina). It is currently being cultivated in the sub-tropical regions of Australia as a pasture plant and soil stabiliser, particularly along roadsides. However, it is beginning to appear in nearby natural areas and has the potential to become an environmental weed.

### Distribution

Brunswick grass is relatively new to Australia, and has only been cultivated to any degree in the last 20 years or so. It is becoming important in pastures in higher rainfall sub-tropical areas, where it is replacing kikuyu in some situations. It is also being used as a ground cover on roadsides and in high-wear areas, and is beginning to appear in seed mixes for hydraulic seeding and mulching.

Like many other pasture plants, Brunswick grass has begun to spread from cultivation. It was first recorded becoming naturalised several years ago around Rappville in the Casino district in north-eastern NSW. It has also recently been recorded in south-eastern Queensland, with most populations being closely associated with recently constructed highways and motorways around Brisbane. It is also becoming weedy in south-eastern USA (i.e. Alabama, Georgia and Florida), where it has recently been employed for the same purposes in similar environments.

### Description

Brunswick grass is a long-lived plant generally growing less than 70 cm tall. It is usually somewhat tufted in habit, but may also develop short creeping underground stems and become somewhat mat-forming in nature. Its long and narrow leaves (10-30 cm long and 2-9 mm wide) are usually distinctly greyish-green or bluish-green in colour.

The seed-heads are mostly produced in summer, and closely resemble those of Common paspalum. They are borne at the top of slender stems and have 2-5 short flowering branches, each usually 2-6 cm long. These seed-head branches bear numerous small flower spikelets (2.5-3 mm long and about 1.5 mm wide) in four uneven rows. The small flower spikelets each produce a single seed and turn from greyish-green to dark brown as they mature.

### Quick Facts

- > A long-lived clumping grass usually growing less than 70 cm tall
- > Its leaves are usually greyish-green or bluish-green in colour
- > Seed-heads with 2-5 short branches, with seeds arranged in four uneven rows
- > Seeds turn from greyish-green to dark brown as they mature

### Habitat

Brunswick grass is moderately shade tolerant and will grow under more open tree canopies. Because it forms a good groundcover, it is often used for soil conservation and stabilisation of roadsides and waterways. Therefore it is often seen in these habitats, or in surrounding bushland margins. It is also grown as a pasture plant in rural regions, from where it can spread to surrounding vegetation and cropping areas.



■ Documented distribution



1. Infestation in bushland revegetation site 2. Close-up of mature seeds.

## Reproduction and Dispersal

This species seeds prolifically in warmer environments, and may also spread laterally via short creeping underground stems. In pasture areas, it may be spread by cattle and other animals that ingest the seed. Along roadsides, seeds and stem segments may be spread by vehicles and road maintenance activities (e.g. mowing, slashing, grading, etc.). Seeds may also be dispersed into waterways and down catchments following significant rainfall events.

## Why is it an Emerging Threat?

Brunswick grass is very competitive, and is known to suppress native grasses such as Blady grass and Spear grass in pastures. It also competes effectively with introduced grasses, such as the aggressive Bahia grass (*Paspalum notatum*), and will suppress many broadleaf weeds. Less palatable forms, such as the low growing and rapidly maturing type that has become naturalised in northern NSW, are considered to be weedy in crops and pastures. Brunswick grass also has the potential to out compete and replace native species along waterways and in bushland areas.

## Control Methods

Brunswick grass is difficult to control in crops, due to regeneration from underground segments after cultivation. It is also difficult to control with herbicides, and mature stands are not significantly affected by haloxyfop, triclopyr, sulfometuron, metsulfuron and atrazine. It is weakened by glyphosate at normal rates, but recovers within about a month, and double normal rates are required for a complete kill.

Isolated Brunswick grass plants growing in natural vegetation may be removed manually, ideally prior to seeding, but care should be taken to remove all of the tussock - while at the same time minimising any soil disturbance. Any mature seed-heads should be collected, bagged and disposed of in a sanitary manner to prevent the spread of seed.

No chemicals are currently specifically registered for the control of Brunswick grass in Australia. However, within Queensland, the control of invasive grasses in non-crop areas is permitted under the conditions outlined in APVMA off-label permit I 1463 (<http://permits.apvma.gov.au/PERI1463.PDF>). This temporary permit allows for the spot spraying of grass weeds in bushland areas with certain herbicides (e.g. glyphosate, fluazifop and haloxyfop). However, if the weed is growing near a waterway then only products registered for use in aquatic situations should be used (e.g. Round-up Biactive or Weedmaster Duo). Always read and follow the conditions on this permit carefully before employing this method and, unless otherwise stated in the off-label permit, the use of the product must be in accordance with the instructions on its label. Within other state boundaries, it is recommended that all managers consult any relevant permits or government legislation applicable to their region.

The control methods referred to in Weed Watch™ should be used in accordance with the restrictions (federal and state legislation and local government laws) directly or indirectly related to each control method. These restrictions may prevent the utilisation of one or more of the methods referred to, depending on individual circumstances. While every care is taken to ensure the accuracy of this information, Technigro does not invite reliance upon it, nor accept responsibility for any loss or damage caused by actions based on it.

This information has been developed with the assistance of Dr Sheldon Navie. Photographs are also courtesy of Dr Sheldon Navie © Technigro Australia Pty Ltd 2012

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## Look a-likes

Brunswick grass can be easily confused with other introduced and native *Paspalum* species, and is very similar to Ditch millet (*Paspalum scrobiculatum*). However, Brunswick grass usually has a distinctive bluish tinge to its foliage and its seeds are arranged in four uneven rows, while Ditch millet has green or purplish tinged leaves and its seeds are usually arranged in two even rows.



**Top.** Seeds in two even rows.

**Bottom.** Habit of Ditch millet with bright green leaves.