

Serrated Tussock Notes

Tasmanian Serrated Tussock Management Project

Spring 2005

NEW WEBSITE



For up-to-date information about the serrated tussock project, and advice on identification and control, visit:

www.tlwp.com.au

and follow the serrated tussock link.

QUICK NEWS

- Contact us NOW for grants to control serrated tussock on your property.
- Spring is the best time to control serrated tussock.
- The Tasmanian Serrated Tussock Program has so far financed the control of 1,250 ha of infested land.

TASMANIAN SERRATED TUSSOCK MANAGEMENT PROJECT

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Australian Government

Department of the Environment and Heritage
Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

New Funding for Tussock Control

If you need help controlling serrated tussock on your land, the Tasmanian Serrated Tussock Management Project can help.

We have received funding through the Australian Government's *Defeating the Weeds Menace* program for twenty new management plans to be developed and funded.

This year we are focussing on properties with absentee owners, as in previous years they have slipped through the net as the owners are often very hard to contact.

However, we will also fund weed control activities at other high priority sites. These could include infestations that are isolated (e.g. Dunalley, Carlton, Sorell, Richmond, Cambridge), or where neighbouring properties all have a management plan in place.

To obtain the funds landowners must enter into a 3 year agreement and have a management plan developed (*we do this for you*). Under the agreement, the project pays for weed control work in the first year, and you agree to conduct any follow-up work that is required to



control any germinating seedlings in years 2 and 3.

We are currently calling for applications so that control work can be carried out before the summer seeding.

We only have enough money to fund 20 landowners so you will need to act quickly. If you think you qualify, or know a neighbour who might qualify, or know of an infested block of land with an absentee owner please contact us as soon as possible on 6234 2939.

Control Options in Spring

Spring is the best time to control serrated tussock; plants are actively growing, seedlings have germinated, we can use flupropanate for spraying, and most importantly tussock controlled now won't set seed this summer.

Chemical Control

Flupropanate is registered for spot spraying from Spring until Autumn and is highly selective; it does not kill most pasture grasses or natives. This means that other grasses can keep growing around and close to old serrated tussock plants, crowding out

any small tussock seedlings that may germinate. The key to any control program is to minimise bare ground!

Cultural control

Physical removal is a viable option if infestations are light. For heavier infestations, it may be better to plough the ground and sow other grass species. This does two things, it buries the tussock seed so it cannot germinate, and introduces competition from other grasses, which can smother the tussock.

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Hygiene—Stock

Later in spring serrated tussock will begin flowering and setting seed. It is important to manage stock carefully at these times, to prevent seed transfer to new areas. Sheep, horses, cattle and goats are all capable of moving serrated tussock from one property to another on or in their hooves, gut, wool or hair. For this reason sheep and goats need to be shorn before moving.

It is also recommended that stock should also be grazed on tussock free ground for four weeks before being moved to other properties, so that all seeds can pass through their systems.

Hygiene—Soil

With the amount of subdivision that is happening at the moment, it is also important to be careful about the movement of soil from place to place. If you are involved in earthmoving, the most responsible course of action for serrated tussock infested ground is to pile up soil on the site if it does need to be moved, and use it on site after all digging works have finished. Do not sell topsoil from serrated tussock infested sites.

In addition, it is important to wash down machinery when it has to be moved to another site. This is especially important if conditions have been wet at the serrated tussock infested site. Fire fighting pumps are useful on sites where there is no electricity to power high pressure hoses for cleaning.

Serrated Tussock found at Swansea

Earlier this year a new infestation of serrated tussock was discovered near Swansea. This is a highly important infestation as it is the only one (*apart from on King Island*) that is found outside the South-East region.

It is thought to have spread there by sheep. The farm on which it occurs has, in the past, bought sheep from properties near Carlton that have tussock infestations. The seeds may have travelled via the fleece, or in the gut, or through mud on the hooves.

The Serrated Tussock Management team moved swiftly to map the infestation, advise the landowner and write up a management plan. Funds will also be made available to spray this spring.

It is crucial that this infestation is eradicated as it provides a gateway for tussock to infest the Midlands of Tasmania. With the low rainfall and poor soil fertility experienced there, it would be very hard to control once established.

This experience highlights the importance for everyone to be vigilant about hygiene. If you are moving stock, machinery, vehicles, soil or firewood out of a serrated tussock infested area, make sure you don't carry seeds to start a new infestation (*see accompanying article on control options*).

Do I have to control Serrated Tussock?

Serrated tussock is considered to be one of the worst weeds in Australia. It has been listed as a Weed of National Significance (*of which there are only 20*), and is a Declared Weed in Tasmania.

Despite this many landowners are unaware of the significance of this weed or know how to identify and control it.

Over the past 3 years, the Tasmanian Serrated Tussock Management Project has received around \$400,000 from the Australian Government to help eradicate this weed.

We have reached a stage where the majority of landowners in the outlying infestations have entered into management agreements and are actively controlling the weed.



Chipping out serrated tussock at Mortimer Bay.

However, we will only ever eradicate serrated tussock if every landowner is doing their bit.

The Serrated Tussock Management team works closely with local council and State Government weed officers to ensure that the project is backed up with weed control enforcement law.

Under the *Weed Management Act 1999*, landowners in Clarence, Sorell and Tasman are required to prevent the spread of serrated tussock.

To achieve this, landowners are expected to:

- Notify a Weed Management Officer of any new occurrence.
- Introduce measures to reduce the number of serrated tussock plants, eradicate it from an area or to restrict it to a particular area.

For more information, read the Serrated Tussock Statutory Weed Management Plan, (online at www.dpiwe.tas.gov.au), or phone the DPIWE Southern Regional Weed Management Officer on 6233 3650.