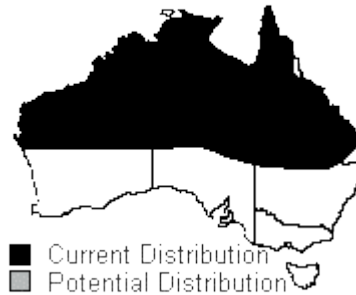


Buffel Grass
Cenchrus ciliaris



Pictorial glossary of plant part terms used in this guide.

Family: Poaceae.

Form: Grass

Origin: Native to Africa and south western Asia.

Flowers/Seedhead: Flowers most of year, usually after rain.

Description: Tufted erect or spreading perennial to 1 m high with a tough rootstock. Often roots from lower nodes. Base of leaf blade with a ring of short hairs (ligule). Leaf blade bluish-green, to 30 cm long and to 1.3 cm wide.

Distinguishing features: Distinguished by seedheads in a dense hairy cylindrical spike to 10 (rarely to 25) cm long and to 2 cm wide; 1–4 spikelets surrounded basally by bristles with forward directed barbs and forming soft purple burrs to 16 mm long, with one bristle longer than others.

Dispersal: Seeds are spread by wind, water, stock and machinery.

Confused With: Another Buffel Grass *Cenchrus pennisetiformis*, see taxonomic texts for distinguishing features.



Seedheads, Carnavon, WA, July

Notes: Grows on all types of soil, commonly on sandy and stony soils. Useful for erosion control and as a pasture species. Can withstand heavy grazing. Often regarded as a weed of alluvial flats and riverine sites. Still spreading. Major environmental weed of northern Australia where it displaces native species. Plants are fire resistant but have the ability to carry fire in areas where fire was not normally part of the ecosystem. The species requires summer rain and is not cold tolerant.

References:

Flora of NSW. G. Harden (ed), Vol. 4, 1993, page 500–502. *Weeds of Natural Ecosystems: a field guide to environmental weeds of the Northern Territory*. N. Smith, 1995, NT Environment Centre, page 51.

Web References: [Search Australian web sites for further information on this weed.](#)



After rain, Alice Springs, NT, April
photo C. Wilson



Spikelets
photo C. Wilson



Mature seedheads
Alice Springs, NT, Aug
photo C. Wilson



This weed has been included in the WEEDeck field guide as card **G06**