



● CHILEAN NEEDLE GRASS IS FOUND IN CERTAIN PARTS OF CANTERBURY.

## Control options

Chilean needle grass is very hard to control due to the difficulty in identifying infestations and the long life of the seed in soil. Any landowner who has, or suspects they have, found Chilean needle grass on their property should work with Environment Canterbury to develop an individual control plan suitable to their property.

Control methods may include a combination of:

- › Hand removal
- › Knock down herbicides (e.g. glyphosate)
- › Residual herbicides (e.g. Taskforce).

To prevent the spread of Chilean needle grass, landowners should practice good on-farm biosecurity:

- › Erecting biosecurity gate signage
- › Minimising vehicle and stock movements on the property
- › Providing a wash down area for vehicles entering or leaving your property
- › Searching your property for infestations in November/December every year.



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*There is currently 3500ha of land infested with Chilean needle grass in New Zealand, spread across Canterbury (300ha), Marlborough (2700ha) and Hawkes Bay (500ha). It has the potential to infest 15 million hectares nationwide.*”

**More information**  
[www.ecan.govt.nz/pests](http://www.ecan.govt.nz/pests)  
(pages 50 to 52 of the plan)

 **Environment  
Canterbury**  
Regional Council  
*Kaunhthera Taiiao ki Waitaha*

Contact us on:  
0800 324 636 or  
[biosecurity@ecan.govt.nz](mailto:biosecurity@ecan.govt.nz)

E18/6756

# Chilean Needle Grass

## WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

# Chilean Needle Grass

(*Nassella neesiana*)

## PEST STATUS:

Sustained Control Programme

The objective of this programme is to contain Chilean needle grass to known sites.

## Why is Chilean needle grass a pest?

Chilean needle grass (CNG) is an invasive weed that negatively affects both farming and the environment. Infestations reduce the livestock-carrying capacity of pasture and sharp seeds can cause animal welfare issues. A change in farm practice is often required as stock must be removed from infested areas from late October until March to avoid contact with seeds.

CNG is hard to identify and seeds can last for more than 10 years in the soil, making it difficult and costly to control in the long term. Its seeds can be spread by people, animals, vehicles and machinery as well as in mud, plant matter and water.

## Who is responsible for control?

Landowners who occupy a property with Chilean needle grass must:

- > be party to a Chilean Needle Grass Management Agreement with Environment Canterbury and;
- > eliminate all plants within 5m of a neighbouring property boundary each year before panicle seeds set.

The Chilean Needle Grass Management Agreement is a written plan specific to your farm. It contains agreed measures to prevent the spread of CNG from your property.

Any landowner who does not want an agreement needs to eliminate all CNG plants from their property each year before panicle seeds set.

*Environment Canterbury will undertake annual surveillance and follow up on suspected sightings. If you think you have found it, contact us right away.*



## WHAT TO LOOK OUT FOR



Chilean needle grass is an erect tufted perennial grass, most easily identified during November/December when distinct purple panicle seeds are present.

### Flowers

- > Immature seeds are reddish purple in colour
- > Long, kinked awns up to 7cm long
- > Needle-like tip



### Fruit/Seed

- > Seeds fade to light brown as they mature
- > Seeds intertwine to form clusters before detachment from panicle



### Leaf

- > Bright green 2-8mm wide
- > Flat and rough towards base

Image credits:  
Top: Tony Benny  
Middle: Carl Forrester