

# Spiny burrgrass (*Cenchrus longispinus*)

## Weed management guide

Weed type  
**Grass**

November 2022

[www.lls.nsw.gov.au/regions/central-west](http://www.lls.nsw.gov.au/regions/central-west)



In NSW, weeds are regulated by the NSW Biosecurity Act, 2015. All land managers have a General Biosecurity Duty to contain the spread of weeds.

*“General Biosecurity Duty means that any person dealing with plant matter must take measures to prevent, minimise or eliminate the biosecurity risk (as far as is reasonably practicable).”*

The Regional priority for Spiny burrgrass is to protect assets from the weed’s impacts and to prevent its arrival and establishment in the region. In order to achieve this, Land Managers are asked to: *Mitigate the risk of new weeds being introduced to their land and reduce impacts on priority assets. The plant should not be bought, sold, grown, carried or released into the environment.*

For further information, contact your local Biosecurity (Weeds) Officer via Central West Local Land Services or visit NSW WeedWise.

NSW WeedWise



# Habit and description

Spiny burrgrass is an erect or spreading annual grass native to warm, dry areas of the northern hemisphere. It can grow to 60cm tall with prominent burrs. The burrs are the seed source of Spiny burrgrass. Burrs are typically oval with stout bristles that are densely hairy with a purple-tinged tip. The burrs bristles or spines are narrow and interlock.



Photo: © L. Turton | NSW DPI



Photo: © Matt Lavin | NSW DPI



Photo: © Michael B | Canberra Nature Map



Photo: © Howard F Schwartz | Colorado State University

# Reproduction and spread

Spiny burrgrass spreads primarily via seed through the burrs. The barbed spines on the burr can attach to clothing, machinery, animal fur/fleece and vehicle tyres. Agricultural activities can easily spread this weed into new areas.

## Impacts

### Agriculture

- Can injure stock when spines pierce skin/mouth.
- Reduce quality of stock and wool when entangled.
- Can contaminate dried fruit and hay.



### Native vegetation

- Rapidly spread into native vegetation through animal vectors.
- Hard to control and manage.
- Can form dense infestations in favourable conditions.



## Management

### Chemical

- Spot spray isolated plants or small patches year-round prior to seed set.
- Large infestations can be sprayed with a boom spray.
- Seek the guidance of an experienced Weeds Officer for expert advice on herbicide use.
- Visit [www.apvma.gov.au](http://www.apvma.gov.au) for a list of registered products, product labels and permit requirements.
- NSW DPI (2021) provides a list of recommended herbicides for the control of Spiny burrgrass at <https://weeds.dpi.nsw.gov.au/Weeds/SpinyBurrgrassLongispinus>.



### Non-chemical

- Increased competition via good pasture establishment
- Cultivation can be strategically used to stimulate germination to remove dormant seed bank.
- Grazing can be used when burrs are not present.
- Prevention of spread by using proper machinery hygiene practices.



# Management calendar

	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
Life cycle												
Fructing												
Vegetative growth												
Management tools												
									Flowering		Fructing	
									Germination		Vegetative growth	
									Hand weed small, isolated plants / seedlings.			
									Herbicide application is most effective when plants are actively growing. Pre-emergent herbicides have shown good control of Spiny burrgrass.			

Optimal control options may vary depending on your location and climate. Consult an experienced Weeds Officer based in your local government area for control methods suited to your conditions.

All herbicides must be used in accordance with the herbicide label and permit requirements.

## Further information

For more information on your general biosecurity duties, visit [www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/biosecurity](http://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/biosecurity).

For the best guidance on how to meet this duty on your property, contact your expert Weeds Officer at your local council or via Local Land Services [www.lls.nsw.gov.au/regions/central-west](http://www.lls.nsw.gov.au/regions/central-west).

NSW WeedWise



## References

- NSW DPI. (2012). *Spiny burrgrass*. Invasive Species Unit. [https://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0006/265056/Spiny-burrgrass.pdf](https://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0006/265056/Spiny-burrgrass.pdf)
- NSW DPI. (2017). *Weed categories*. <https://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/biosecurity/weeds/weed-categories>
- NSW DPI. (2021). *NSW WeedWise*. <https://weeds.dpi.nsw.gov.au/Weeds/SpinyBurrgrassLongispinus>

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