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New weed found on outskirts

Once thought eradicated from the Townsville region, one of the Northern Territory's worst weeds has been found thriving in Alligator Creek, south of Townsville.

Kyasuma grass, a highly invasive variety of mission grass, has been discovered growing on a hectare of private property.

The grass is loathed because it's quick growing, unpalatable to livestock and out-competes native species.

Parts of the Northern Territory have been so overtaken by the grass it's impossible to eradicate.

Kyasuma grass is related to buffel grass. It grows tall and has a feathery seed head. It was introduced to Australia from Africa as an experimental pastoral species.

Populations of the grass exist on the Atherton Tablelands and Cape York Peninsula.

NQ Dry Tropics project manager Judy Warner says she was alarmed to find it growing in Alligator Creek.

"There are horses in the paddock where we found the grass and they're eating all sorts of plants we wouldn't expect them to in an effort to avoid kyasuma grass." Judy said.

She understands the weed has been in the area before but was successfully eradicated.

"This is an emerging weed for which there is no current legislation. We'd just like to make people aware of it so they can look out for it on their property. Weeds are everyone's responsibility." Judy said.

The seed is spread by wind, vehicles and livestock and it thrives in tropical conditions.

NQ Dry Tropics discovered the grass as part of the Healthy Habitat project. Healthy Habitat is about improving environments on semi-rural properties in Alligator Creek and Black River.

Contact NQ Dry Tropics if you want further information about this grass.



Our region includes the local government areas of Townsville, Charters Towers, Burdekin, Isaac, Barcaldine, Etheridge, Hinchinbrook, Palm Island and the Whitsundays.

Media contact

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