

Handweeding **Perennial Veldt Grass** (*Ehrharta calycina*)

Why weed, and why target just one?

A weed is simply a plant growing where it is not wanted. Weeds cause many problem issues and cost the economy billions of dollars annually within both the agricultural sector and the natural environment.

- They change plant distribution of the native ecosystem.
- They create a fire hazard.
- They compete for space, water, nutrients, and sunlight.
- They often grow faster and are very fecund.
- They may have allelopathic properties.
- They can be toxic to animals and people.
- They may provide shelter and food for many pests and diseases.

Perennial veldt grass is native to South Africa and a very common weed of urban bushlands.



Although perennial veldt is not toxic to animals or people, it does cause many of the above issues that are of concern. It is perennial, which means it is there for more than two seasons-it does not die off and disappear. It grows into a larger plant (80cm) more quickly than many other smaller weeds and therefore has quite an impact in quick time, crowding out native species. It also presents as a serious fire hazard and is best removed completely.

For these reasons it is one of the priority weeding targets.

Image from <https://florabase.dpaw.wa.gov.au/browse/profile/347>

How?

Grasping the leaves to expose the base of the plant, remove the entire plant with aid of a serrated knife cutting into the soil. A bread or steak knife is perfect for use.

Take care to remove all the plant matter down to the root mass, cutting just underneath the crown to leave just the fibrous roots in the soil. Even if the plant looks dead it must be removed as it may have living tissue hidden within it.

Create as little soil disturbance as possible. This discourages other weed seeds that are in the soil to germinate.

Always work from areas with native growth towards weed infested areas. Make neat piles of your weeds as you go for bagging and removal off site.

OHS

Wear protective clothing including a hat, long sleeve shirt and trousers, enclosed shoes, gloves and sunglasses. Watch out for prickly leaves and branches, and careful of being scratched or stabbed in the eyes by sedges etc. Use your knife carefully and cut away from you where possible. Watch out for ant nests and do not disturb.