

# Please call 1-866-invader if you suspect you have found this species

**Ravenna Grass**  
*Saccharum ravennae*

**Other common names: Hardy Pampas grass, Plume grass,**

**USDA symbol: SARA3**  
**ODA rating: A**



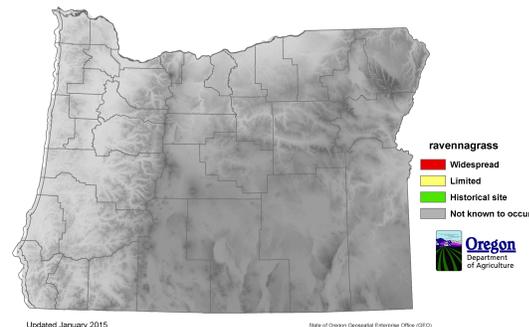
**Introduction:** Ravenna grass is a large perennial bunchgrass with flowering stems, and is nearly 12 feet tall at maturity. It is native to the Mediterranean region of Africa and Eurasia. The plant has been sold in the U.S. for 90 years as a cold hardy ornamental grass with striking size. In spite of this history it is a relatively recent addition to the list of invasive plants in the Western U.S.

**Distribution:** In Oregon, the only confirmed site of Ravenna grass is in Umatilla County. It is known to have escaped cultivation in several areas of Benton, Franklin and Yakima Counties in Washington and is invading riparian areas in California. More sites are likely to be found in Oregon due to the plants long presence in the ornamental industry.

**Description:** Ravenna grass is easy to tell from most other grasses due to its size, it is similar to two other large perennial bunchgrasses that also have been used as ornamentals. Pampas grass (*Cortaderia selloana*) and jubata grass (*Cortaderia jubata*) roughly resemble Ravenna grass. Ravenna grass can be distinguished by having leaf blade bases that are very densely covered with fuzzy hairs that typically hide the ligule and the upper surface of the blade base (Center photo above). There are rarely hairs on the leaves of Pampas or Jubata grass. Ravenna grass can also be distinguished from the other two species because they both have sharply serrated leaves that can cut hands, while Ravenna is weakly serrated and doesn't cut. Ravenna grass has very tall plumes on jointed stems that stand well above the larger basal leaves. These flowering stems have leaves up to the base of the inflorescence. Further, Ravenna grass can have a red coloring on its stems. Jubata and pampas grass don't have red on the stems.

**Impacts:** If Ravenna grass has adequate moisture and partial sunlight it can form thick stands and may exclude native plant communities through competition. Ravenna grass may have higher water use than some native riparian or wetland species because it has a lot of leaf surface area. It can anchor riparian soils (i.e. gravel bars and stream banks) normally more subject to shifting and act as a physical barrier to stream flow debris in flooding riparian systems. This may shift erosion locations. Extensive wild populations of Ravenna grass have the potential to change riparian vegetation character and stream morphology in wetland habitats and spawning habitat for Salmonids. With Oregon's investment in healthy populations of Salmonids this would call for costly control measures. Ravenna grass is a potential threat to agricultural irrigation – especially where open ditches with soil bottoms are used.

**Control:** Glyphosate and Imazapyr treatments are reported to be effective. Physical removal of all the roots is key to prevent re-sprouting. No biocontrol agents are available.



Oregon Department of Agriculture • Noxious Weed Control Program  
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[www.oregon.gov/ODA/programs/Weeds/Pages/Default.aspx](http://www.oregon.gov/ODA/programs/Weeds/Pages/Default.aspx)

Photos: Thanks to Washington State Department of Agriculture