

## SACRAMENTO WEED WARRIORS - How are we removing Pampas Grass?

Sacramento Weed Warriors conducts removal work groups every month. Community volunteers of all ages are participating on the first Saturday each month. SWW provides the necessary tools and gloves, an orientation, and supervision at each of these events.

SWW volunteers are using hand tools to remove pampas grass, including loppers, long-handled shovels, a pulaski (axe on one end and hoe on the other) or a mattuck (pick on one end and hoe on the other). For smaller plants, the upper vegetation is cut back flush to the ground, to expose the root crown. The roots are then dug up and removed to prevent resprouting.



Professional work crews often use heavy equipment, chain saws and brush cutters to remove upper vegetation from large plants. In areas where herbicide use is appropriate, a certified applicator may apply selected herbicides to the entire plant's foliage, or to the exposed root crown if the upper vegetation is removed.

Special thanks to Supriya Mody for the graphic design.

## What can YOU do?

- **Report pampas grass being sold in nurseries**  
If you find pampas grass being sold in nurseries, let SWW know. We will communicate with the owner to inform them that it is an invasive weed and encourage the sale of native grasses instead. Some major businesses have already agreed to discontinue selling pampas grass in California.
- **Join a Sacramento Weed Warriors work group**  
We conduct a community work group on the first Saturday of every month. Pampas grass is one of the top priority invasive species being removed from the American River Parkway and along waterways throughout the Sacramento region. More information about Sacramento Weed Warriors and invasive weeds is online at [www.sacvalleycnps.org](http://www.sacvalleycnps.org).

### How to contact us

#### If you would like more information, please contact:

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*Sacramento Weed Warriors (SWW) is a community stewardship initiative of the California Native Plant Society-Sacramento Valley Chapter. Many local organizations, including the American River Parkway Foundation and the Sacramento Urban Creeks Council, provide support. SWW is currently receiving funding to implement the Community Stewardship Component of the American River Parkway-Invasive Plant Management Project (ARP-IPMP). During Phase 1 of this long term project, IPMP professional crews and SWW volunteers are removing 5 invasive plant species located on 653 acres in the Parkway. On a long term basis, SWW will be responsible for monitoring more than 800 acres to be sure that new plants are treated or removed before more seeds are produced.*

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An environmental stewardship project of the California Native Plant Society-Sacramento Valley Chapter

## Pampas Grass

(Cortaderia seloana)



## Invasive Weed Fact Sheet



## What is Pampas Grass?

- Pampas grass (*Cortaderia seloana*) is a rapidly growing grass that forms large dense clumps along sandbars, cobblestone flood plains, creekside waterways, and open areas that have been disturbed by human activities.
- It has long green leaves with sharp serrated edges that make it unpalatable for wildlife and painful to walk through.
- Plants can reach 10-12 feet in height. The snowy white plumes often tower up to 6 feet above the tussock (the central leafy portion of the plant). These plumes each contain thousands of seeds.
- Pampas grass can tolerate intense sunlight, moderate drought and winter frost.
- Pampas grass plants can live over a decade.



## Why is it a problem?

- Pampas grass is a widespread species that is infesting many areas of California and has begun to spread rapidly along the American River Parkway. It establishes easily in any disturbed area, along roadsides, steep cliff faces and river banks, and along eroding slopes.
- Pampas grass invades creekside and upland habitats, displacing native plants.
- The sharp leaf blades do not provide food or shelter for birds or other wildlife.
- The serrated edges can easily cut human skin.
- It can limit the growth of woodland saplings and other plants by consuming large amounts of water and nutrients from the soil.
- Large older clumps can become a fire hazard.



## Where does it come from?

- Pampas grass is native to Argentina, Brazil, and Uruguay. It was first introduced into Europe and then brought to California in 1848 by nurserymen who introduced it in the Santa Barbara area.
- Commercial production began in California in 1874 and it has been sold as an ornamental plant in many areas of the state.
- Beginning in 1946, the Soil Conservation Services in Ventura and Los Angeles counties planted it to prevent erosion.

## How does it spread?

- Pampas grass plants can produce millions of seeds each year that can be dispersed long distances in the wind.
- During high water high water flows, root fragments of plants in the floodplain can be swept downstream to a new location where a new colony is quickly started.
- Pampas grass plants also expand locally as the roots spread underground.