

# What *Themeda* is that?

There are 4 species of *Themeda* in the Northern Territory, 3 native and 1 introduced. They are tufted or tussock grasses growing 1-3m tall. *Themeda* are characterised by the complex arrangements of the spikelets in the seed head. A range of characteristics should be considered to identify your *Themeda*.

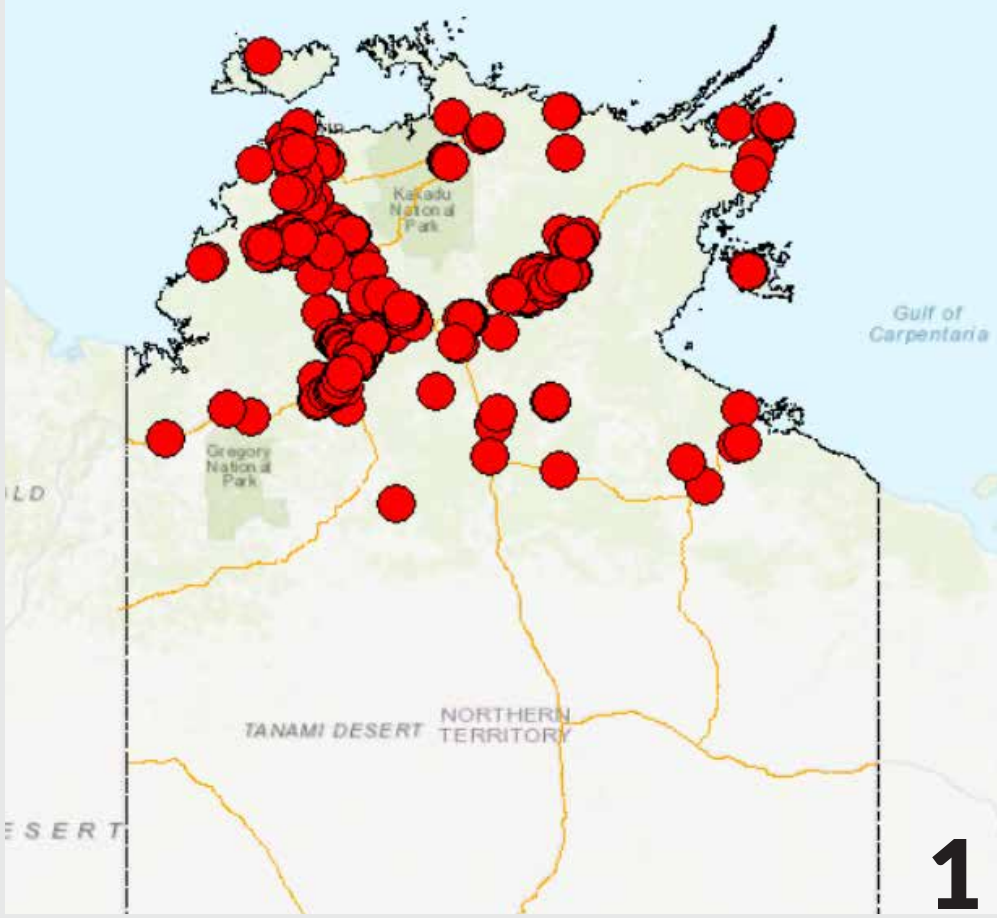
Learn to identify grader grass for early detection and successful control.

The introduced Class B weed, grader grass (*Themeda quadrivalvis*), is mostly unpalatable to stock and outcompetes more useful grasses. Grader grass seed is often transported as a contaminant in hay or mud stuck to vehicles and machinery, including slashers and graders.

## Grader grass (*Themeda quadrivalvis*)

Class B weed - growth and spread to be controlled

### DISTRIBUTION



1

Accidentally introduced from India, now well-established in the Darwin and Katherine regions.

### HABIT



Annual, sometimes biennial. Often forms dense monocultures.

### SEED HEAD



15-60cm with densely packed flower clusters.

### FLOWER CLUSTER



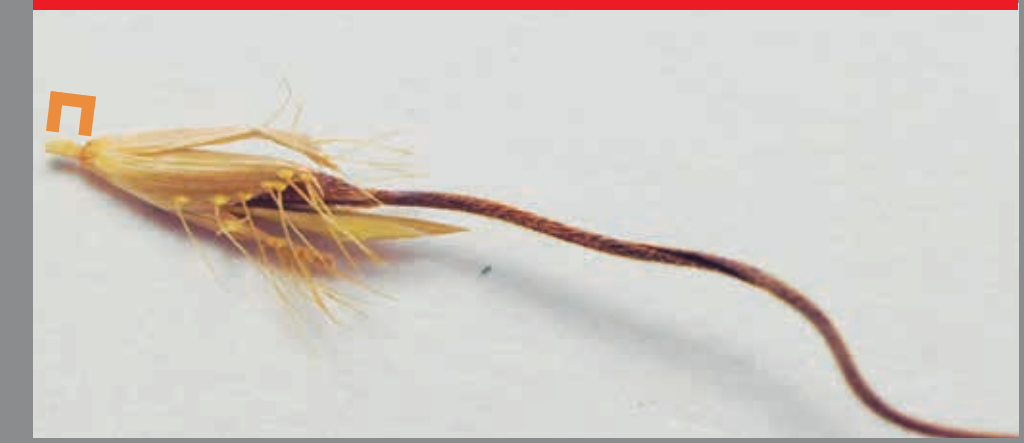
Small (2-3cm not including awn).

### SPIKELET



Small (4-7mm), with distinct bulbous based hairs.

### AWN AND CALLUS



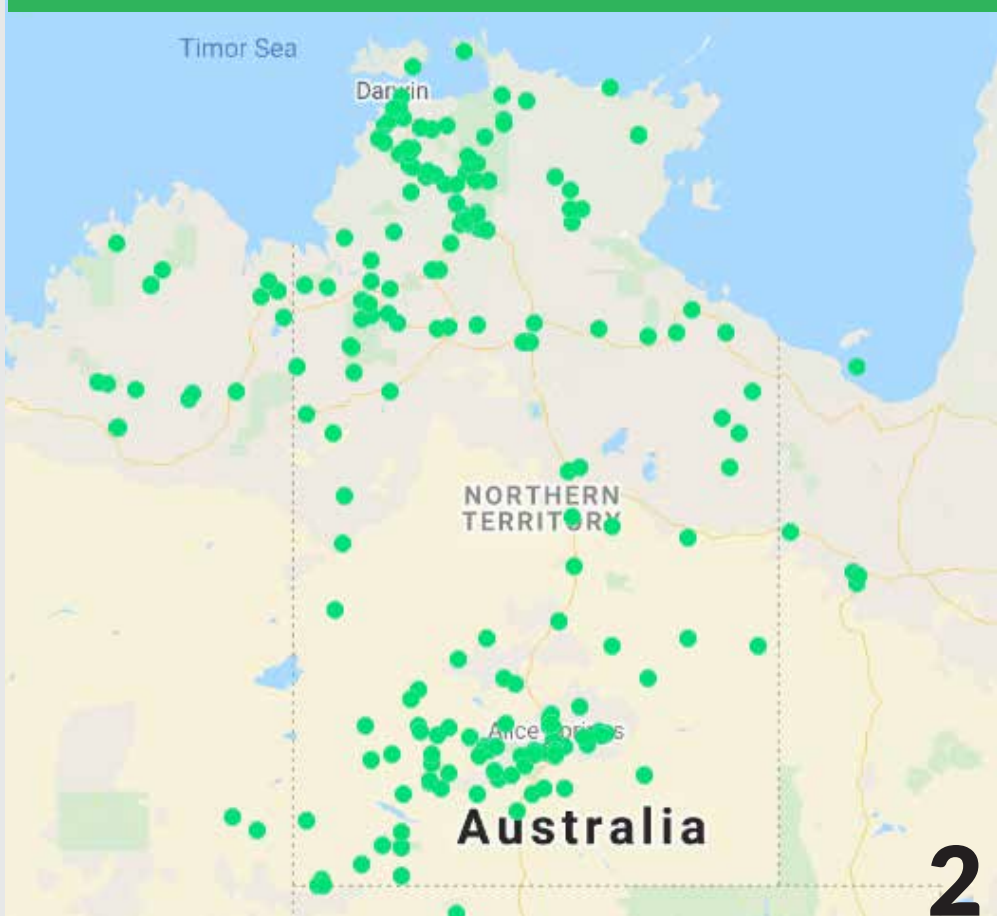
Awn relatively fine (10-45mm). Callus 0.5-1mm.



Bulbous based hairs.

## Kangaroo grass (*Themeda triandra*)

### DISTRIBUTION



2

Top End to Central Australia. Grows to 2m in the Top End, to 1m south of Daly Waters.

### HABIT



Perennial. Often amongst other grass species.

### SEED HEAD



20-50cm with openly spaced flower clusters.

### FLOWER CLUSTER



Moderate (3-6cm not including awn).

### SPIKELET



Moderate (8-14mm), hairless or slightly hairy (rarely bulbous based).

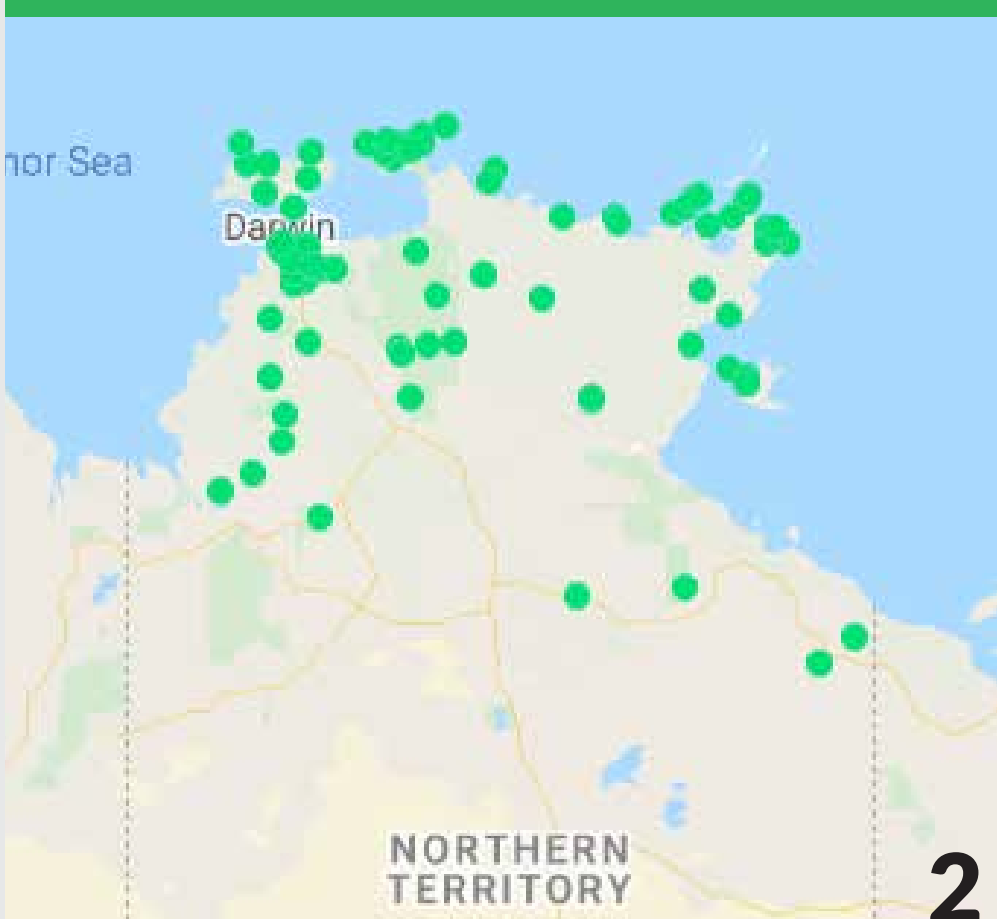
### AWN AND CALLUS



Awn moderate, robust (25-70mm). Callus 2-3mm.

## Annual kangaroo grass (*Themeda arguens*)

### DISTRIBUTION



2

Occurs through the northern tropics. Top End to the upper Barkly region.

### HABIT



Annual. Forms dense stands in wetter areas.

### SEED HEAD



20-60cm with openly spaced flower clusters.

### FLOWER CLUSTER



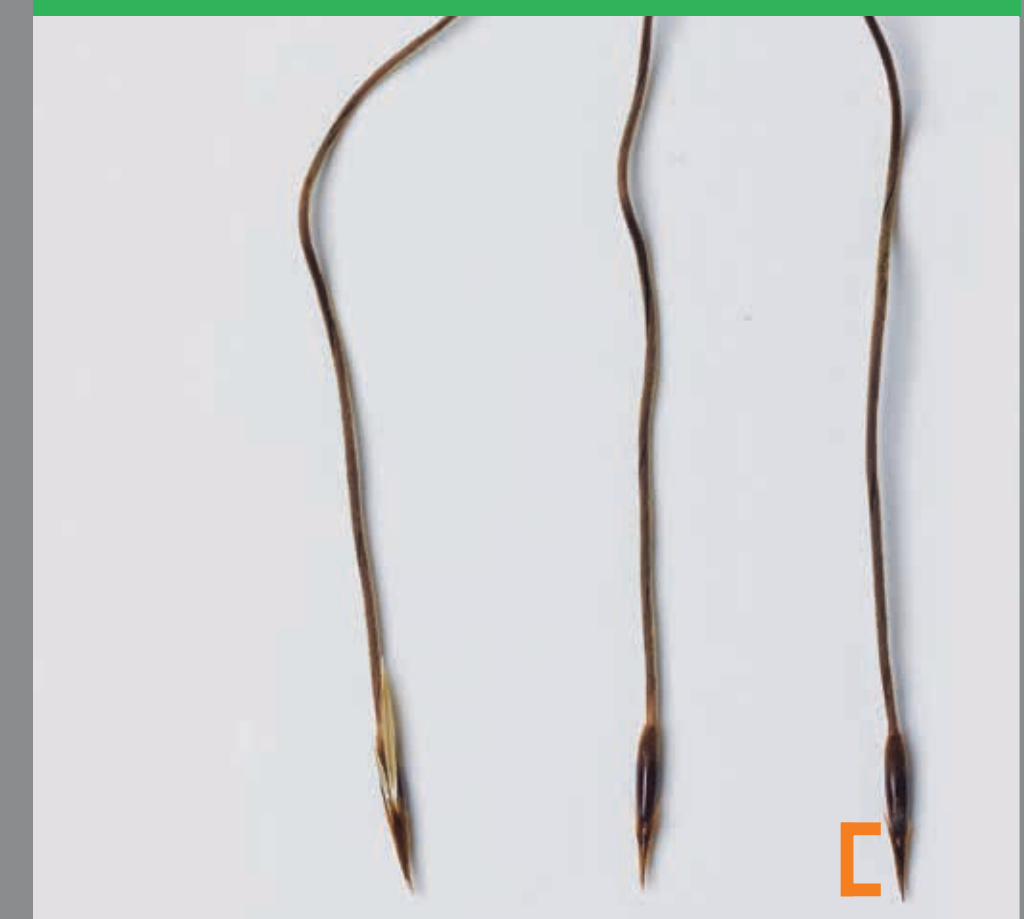
Large (6-11cm not including awn).

### SPIKELET



Moderate (6-11mm), numerous soft hairs to 3mm long.

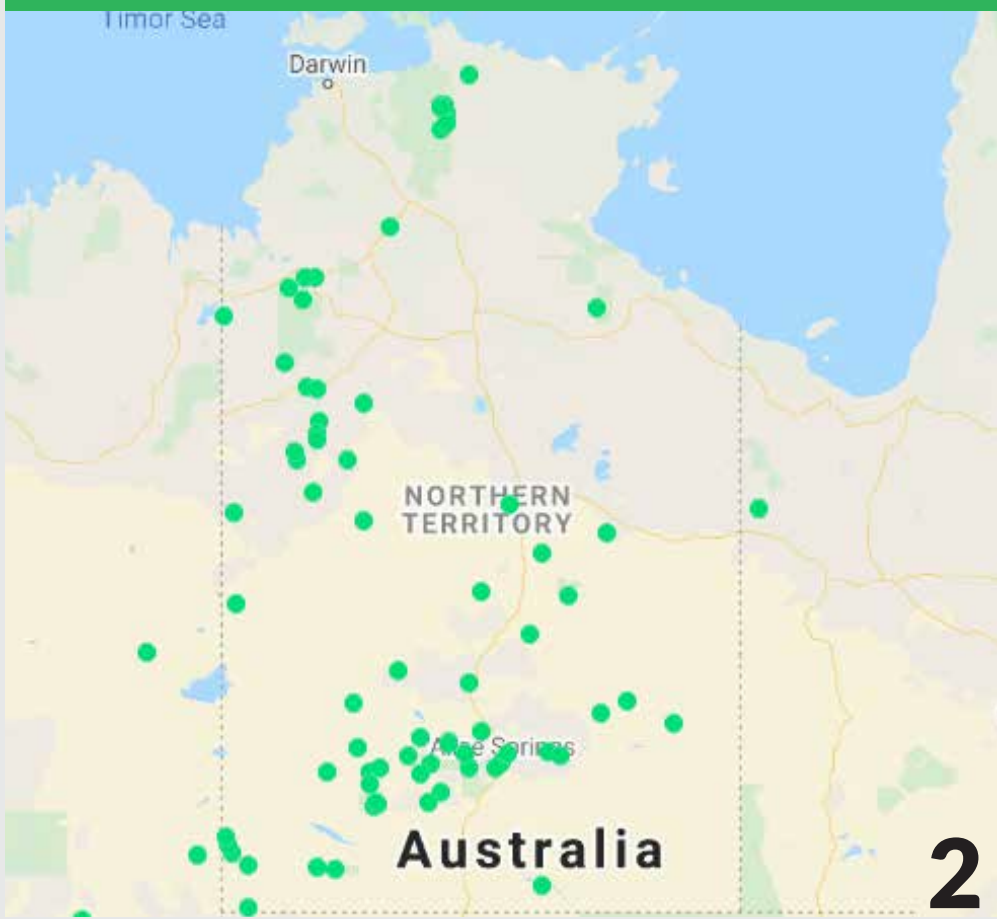
### AWN AND CALLUS



Awn large, robust (70-90mm). Callus 3-4mm.

## Native oatgrass (*Themeda avenacea*)

### DISTRIBUTION



2

Top End (scarce) to Central Australia. More common in arid inland areas.

### HABIT



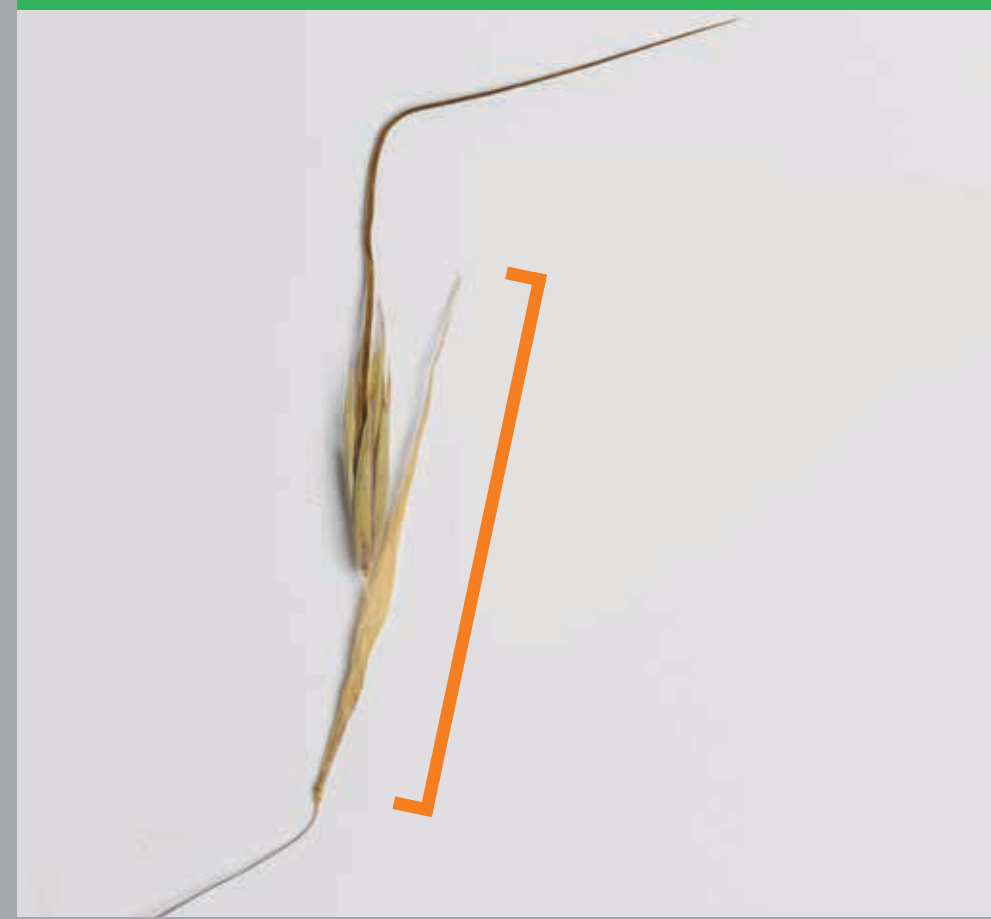
Perennial. Can form large, sparse stands.

### SEED HEAD



25-75cm with openly spaced drooping flower clusters.

### FLOWER CLUSTER



Long, slender (10-15cm not including awn).

### SPIKELET



Large (13-30mm), hairless or densely hairy.

### AWN AND CALLUS



Awns long, stiff (70-190mm). Callus 5-8mm.

Annual	Completing a life-cycle in 1 year. Annual and biennial <i>Themeda</i> grasses have robust stems, a relatively weak root system and can be easily pulled out of the ground.
Awn	The hair or bristle extending from the spikelet.
Biennial	Completing a life-cycle in the second year.
Callus	pl. calli; in <i>Themeda</i> grasses, the sharp, hairy basal point on the spikelet.
Perennial	With a life-span of more than 2 years. Perennial <i>Themeda</i> grasses have slender stems, an extensive root system and are difficult to pull out of the ground. Look for dead leaves or burned-off leaf bases from previous years.
1	Data Source: NT Weed Management Branch, accessed 01/04/2020
2	Data Source: HOLTZE, NT Herbarium Specimen Database, accessed 01/04/2020