

Grasses Discussion Group Cal-IPC Symposium 2005

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Group brainstorm of possible topics for discussion:

- Action before science/science before action?
- When does it make sense for action?
- What do we value?
- Management tools.
- Seed sources.
- Post-fire actions. What should you plant?
- Weed free rice straw.
- Restoring at various scales.
- Perennial non-native grass species and their control.
- Nitrogen deposition.
- Specific species: *Phalaris*, Goat grass, Medusa head.
- Erosion control mixes include species on invasive list.

Group introductions.

Clean wheat straw is a good option because wheat will not persist?

Goat grass control:

- Two successive fires in May/June recommended, but not conclusive.
- Feral pigs dug up grasses. Seeded *Danthonia californica*. *Danthonia* seeded into 1" hoe lines.

Brachypodium control:

- Mid-Peninsula Open Space used Round-up, hand pulling and tarping.

Can you seed perennial grasses post-fire?

No.

Vulpia and *Bromus* control on coastal dunes at Moss Landing:

- 5 acre project.
- Planted Mockheather.
- Hand weeded grasses.
- Mockheather eventually shaded out new seedlings.

Tarping:

- Leave on for a few years.
- Can change soil structure.
- Seed with native forbs to prevent new weeds from invading.
- Can tarp for 6 weeks around August; pull off in October. Annual weed dieback is good; perennials may come back.
- Need stronger tarping if it will be on for a longer amount of time. Recommends landfill quality plastic.
- Can be used as greenhouse to germinate seeds. Must use clear plastic.
- Can remove tarp to germinate seedlings and flush out annual seed bank, and then replace tarp. Has been successful with *Oxalis* removal.
- Lew Stringer and Stuart Weiss volunteered to compile a history of tarping projects and advise on study design for collaborative research.

Lolium control:

- Fire.
- Grazing. Cattle recommended.
- Selective herbicide use. Hoelon is effective, but not yet registered?
- No biological controls known.

Herbicides:

- Puma. Used for *Lolium* control. Looking into getting a local need permit.
- Hoelon is not effective on *Lolium*.
- Round-up is not effective on perennial *Lolium*.
- Currently moving into poor sites as ammonia is pulled from the atmosphere?
- Can manage at a level at which it will not smother other species. Grazing is effective for this.

Medusahead control:

- Low-dose Round-up on Medusahead within 15 days of germination/rain.

Stu Weiss is pulling together observations of annual grasses moving into new places. Due to atmospheric nitrogen deposition. Cannot simply look at levels in the soil to determine availability. Currently creating maps of 4x4 km plots to see deposition levels. Is the addition of carbon a viable option? Sugar can be added; microbes will tie-up nitrogen. However, too much is needed to make it useful. Possibly valuable on a small scale. Woodchips or sawdust may make a good, longer-lasting carbon source. Corn gluten can be used as a suppressant, but it expensive and washes away. Regional precipitation plays a role on carbon options.

Mowing, swathing and haying can be used to control grasses and remove seed sources. Caltrans currently using it.

Annual grass seed bank is not always short-lived, but does have a stronger tendency to rot. Example: wild oats has a long seed viability.

Resources:

CNGA offers good resources for establishing grasslands, www.cnga.org.
Bring Farm Edges Back to Life. Published by the Yolo County RCD.

Velvet grass:

- Exploded in 1998, as it moved from dry to wet sites.
- Recently only seen in small populations.
- Why the change? What steps should be taken?