



# ITCH GRASS

*Rottboellia cochinchinensis*

## Background

Itch grass is an annual grass native to tropical Asia and tropical Africa. This species is causing problems for crops around the world and is now an **emerging weed** in the Mackay Whitsunday region. Itch grass poses a threat to the sugar cane industry. Infestations can cause severe crop losses and are difficult control once established. Each plant can produce over 2,000 seeds with seed surviving in the soil for up to 7 years.

## Distinctive Features

Stiff sharp **hairs** on stem and leaf sheath (can irritate and penetrate your skin).

**Prop (tiller) roots** off lower nodes.

**Spear-like flowers** that break into individual **seed** sections.

Grows to **4m tall**.

## Preventing Spread:

Preventing spread is the most effective approach to weed control. Don't slash itch grass when it is seeding and consider the following:

- Monitor movements of machinery and equipment, check and clean vehicles and gear appropriately as it is leaving and entering a property, ensuring they are clear of mud and plant material.
- Prevent the movement of contaminated hay, soil and mulch. Removing suspicious new seedling growth in mulch or soil could prevent many hours of spraying later.



## Management

Isolated infestations have been located at sites in Bloomsbury, Kelsey Creek, Strathdickie, Dingo Beach, Mt Ossa and Emerson Springs. It is also an issue in the Burdekin region. If you think you have found itch grass on your property, please contact Reef Catchments at [info@reefcatchments.com](mailto:info@reefcatchments.com)

Mechanical and chemical control options will vary depending on your property. Reef Catchments can provide support by directing you to the best place for control advice.

Mackay Regional Pest Management Group



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Catchment  
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