
PROJECT: Characteristics of Tropical Tall Grasses

Project Period: 1999-2002

Project Officers: G. Hore and B. Ross

Project Location: Darwin area

Objective:

To document and assist others to identify common native perennial tall grasses found in the Darwin region.

Background:

Current publications on the flora of the Top End contain descriptions and illustrations of some, but not all, of the perennial tropical grasses commonly found in the Darwin region.

From time to time it is necessary to be able to recognise various tropical tall grasses, eg when mapping/controlling Gamba grass, several native perennial grasses may be mistaken for gamba.

It is also necessary to understand the ecology of these grasses. We need to be able to predict the impacts of changes in their management, eg the increase in haymaking from native grasses for sale as garden mulch, amenity mowing, vegetation slashing as a fire hazard reduction measure and fire hazard reduction burning, and weed control. The effects of grazing by cattle and horses also need to be considered.

There is also currently a growing interest in native grasses from the general public and from organisations involved in revegetation, and amenity planting including roadside revegetation.

Method:

From February to June 1999, in the course of other duties, tall perennial grasses encountered were collected, identified and recorded.

Seed of	<i>Alloteropsis semialata</i>	(Cockatoo grass)
	<i>Heteropogon triticeus</i> ,	(Giant spear grass)
	<i>Sorghum plumosum</i> ,	(Perennial sorghum)
	<i>Mnsithea rottboelloides</i>	(Northern Cane grass)
	<i>Chrysopogon latifolius</i>	(Ribbon grass)

was collected in the field and stored in preparation for sowing demonstration plots of these species next wet season.

An area adjacent to the Seeds Laboratory at Berrimah Farm was obtained for use as a demonstration area.