



# DEALING WITH BUFFLEGRASS

## Why Care About Bufflegrass

Across southern Arizona, an invasive, non-native plant has created a new fire risk and threatens to irrevocably alter our Sonoran desert. Buffelgrass (*Pennisetum ciliare*) is a shrubby grass introduced from the African savannah. Buffelgrass grows in dense stands that crowd out native plants.

Buffelgrass spreads aggressively by seed and establishes itself readily in areas that have been disturbed. Once established in disturbed areas, the invasive grass can then move into native desert habitats on hillsides and along drainages. Buffelgrass stands can burn at over 1,400 degrees and are almost three times hotter than fires generated by flammable native vegetation. Buffelgrass fires are highly detrimental to cacti and native trees and can eliminate them from the landscape. In fact, fire do not significantly impact the Buffelgrass stands, which can come back more vigorously after a fire.

## Identification

Buffelgrass stems grow out of a central point to form a large clump. A mature plant typically grows 3-4 feet in diameter and over 3.5 feet tall. The seeds develop at the end of the stalk, which appears fuzzy and shaped like a bottlebrush. Buffelgrass responds quickly to moisture by turning green, and turns golden brown during dry periods. At each point where the leaf blade diverges from the stalk, delicate hairs grow. You can identify Buffelgrass by running your fingers along the leaf blade. Small stiff hairs make the leaf blade feel rough.

To identify Buffelgrass before eradication, consult the Arizona Cooperative Extension website or [www.buffelgrass.org](http://www.buffelgrass.org) for more identification tips. There are a few native grasses that may look similar. See back for grass comparison photos.



## Eradication

Buffelgrass can actively grow anytime between February and November. During that period, there are two ways to eradicate Buffelgrass. If the plant is more than 50% green, apply Roundup®, which can be found at any home improvement store. If the plant is less than 50% green, the best method is manual removal. Loosen the soil around the plant and then pry or pull the plant out of the ground, including as much of the root as possible. Unfortunately, trimming Buffelgrass is not an effective control method. Be sure to dispose of buffelgrass plants in a heavy plastic bag to avoid spreading the seeds.



Source:

<http://buffelgrass.org>

<http://cals.arizona.edu/maricopa/garden/html/general/hort.html>

