Fire risk report for *Urochloa mutica*

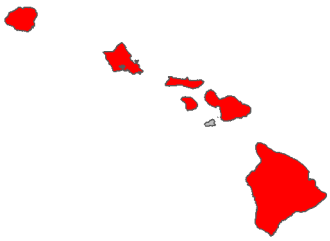
Full Species Name
Urochloa mutica (Forssk.) T.Q.Nguyen

Family: Poaceae

Common names:
California grass
Para grass

Synonyms:
Brachiaria mutica

Known occurrences (as of 2020)



Year first documented as naturalized in Hawai'i: 1924

This species has been ranked by the Hawai'i Weed Risk Assessment program as High Risk with a score of 18.

View photos on Starr Environmental

View on Wikipedia

View occurrences on iNaturalist

View at Plants of Hawaii

View photos on Flickr

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Lowest risk ⇔ Highest risk

This species is likely a **high** fire risk in Hawai'i with a fire risk score of **0.72**.

This species was ranked by our machine learning algorithm using the data presented on the next page. A predicted score of > .34 suggests the plant is a high fire risk.

Summary of Fire ecology	
Native habitat fire proneness	Non Fire-prone
Fire promoting plant in its native range	No
Fire promoting plant in its introduced range*	Yes
Regenerates after fire	Yes
Promoted by fire	No
Reported flammable*	High
Relative is flammable*	Yes

*These values were used by the model to predict fire risk

Detailed summary of Fire Ecology

Native habitat fire proneness (In any part of the plant's native range is its habitat described as fire prone due to natural or human caused fires?)	Non Fire-prone	"Para grass usually grows in such moist conditions that fire is unusual" Skerman, P. J., & Riveros, F. (1990). Tropical grasses (No. 23). Food & Agriculture Org..
Fire promoting plant in its native range (Does the species act as a major fuel source, increase fire severity, frequency, or modify fuel bed characteristics within its native range?)	No	
Fire promoting plant in its introduced range (Same as Fire Promoting Native but within the species introduced range)	Yes	[Wetter habitats may reduce fire risk, but biomass of grass could increase fuel load and fire risk in dry periods or droughts] "in Hawai'i naturalized and usually forming dense mats in areas of high soil moisture or nearby open water, such as along stream banks, drainage ditches, and roadsides, as well as other disturbed sites," Wagner, W.L., Herbst, D.R.& Sohmer, S.H. 1999. Manual of the flowering plants of Hawaii. Revised edition. University of Hawai'i Press and Bishop Museum Press, Honolulu, HI. ---------- "Para grass can be burnt in the dry season and will recover. It is this ability to produce a bulk of fuel in the wet season when not grazed, together with subsequent hot fires that has caused para grass to be regarded as an environmental weed in ungrazed wetland environments in some countries." http://www.tropicalforages.info/index.htm Cook, B.G. et al. 2005. Tropical Forages: an interactive selection tool., SIRO, DPI&F(Qld), CIAT and ILRI. [Accessed 15 May 2019] ---------- "However, paragrass is relatively tolerant to fire and regrowth is commonly observed within 2 wk after burning (Cameron and Lemcke 2008; Stone 2010). Doren et al.

		(1991) reported that paragrass cover did not change after 5 yr of annual burning at Everglades National Park, Florida. Consequently, prescribed burning alone seems to have little impact on paragrass control." https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Sushila_Chaudhari2/publication/261400556_Integrating_chemical_and_cultural_practices_to_control_para_grass_Urochloa_mutica/links/5a53581daca2725638c7f75f/Integrating-chemical-and-cultural-practices-to-control-para-grass-Urochloa-mutica.pdf Chaudhari, S., Sellers, B. A., Rockwood, S. V., Ferrell, J. A., MacDonald, G. E., & Kenworthy, K. E. Nonchemical Methods for Paragrass (Urochloa mutica) Control.
Regenerates after fire (Does the plant regrow after fire by any means? This includes resprouters, reseeders, and recruiters which dispersed into the area within approximately one year post fire)	Yes	"Para grass can be burnt in the dry season and will recover. It is this ability to produce a bulk of fuel in the wet season when not grazed, together with subsequent hot fires that has caused para grass to be regarded as an environmental weed in ungrazed wetland environments in some countries." http://www.tropicalforages.info/index.htm. Cook, B.G. et al. 2005. Tropical Forages: an interactive selection tool., SIRO, DPI&F(Qld), CIAT and ILRI. [Accessed 15 May 2019]
Promoted by fire (Does the plant increase in abundance after a fire?)	No	#no evidence of increase after fire
Reported flammable (Is the species described as being flammable, being a major wildfire fuel, or high fire risk?)	High	"Para grass can be burnt in the dry season and will recover. It is this ability to produce a bulk of fuel in the wet season when not grazed, together with subsequent hot fires that has caused para grass to be regarded as an environmental weed in ungrazed wetland environments in some countries." http://www.tropicalforages.info/index.htm Cook, B.G. et al. 2005. Tropical Forages: an interactive selection tool., SIRO, DPI&F(Qld), CIAT and ILRI. [Accessed 15 May 2019]
Relative is flammable (Does a plant in the same genus meet the Reported Flammable criteria?)	Yes	"For example, invasion of Cerrado neotropical savanna by the grass Urochloa brizantha alters frequency and intensity of natural fires, which in turn benefits the invaders U. brizantha and Urochloa decumbens, i.e. creates positive feedbacks that aggravate the problem (Gorgone-Barbosa,

		Pivello, Baeza, & Fidelis, 2016; Gorgone-Barbosa et al., 2015). "" https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/pdf/10.1111/avsc.12407 Thomas, P. A., Schüler, J., Boavista, L. D. R., Torchelsen, F. P., Overbeck, G. E., & Müller, S. C. (2019). Controlling the invader Urochloa decumbens: Subsidies for ecological restoration in subtropical Campos grassland. Applied Vegetation Science, 22(1), 96-104. --- "Over an 8-year period since the commencement of these treatments, we documented: (i) the annual rate of pasture and native grass invasion in response to increasing fire frequency; (ii) the establishment of Brachiaria decumbens (an African C4 grass) as a function of decreasing canopy cover and (iii) the effects of grass fine fuel on fire intensity. Grasses invaded approximately 200 m from the edge into the interiors of burned plots (B1yr: 4.31 ha; B3yr: 4.96 ha) but invaded less than 10 m into the unburned plot (0.33 ha). The probability of B. decumbens establishment increased with seed availability and decreased with leaf area index. Fine fuel loads along the forest edge were more than three times higher in grass-dominated areas, which resulted in especially intense fires. Our results indicate that synergies between fires and invasive C4 grasses jeopardize the future of tropical forests."" https://royalsocietypublishing.org/doi/full/10.1098/rstb.2012.0427 Silvério, D. V., Brando, P. M., Balch, J. K., Putz, F. E., Nepstad, D. C., Oliveira-Santos, C., & Bustamante, M. M. (2013). Testing the Amazon savannization hypothesis: fire effects on invasion of a neotropical forest by native cerrado and exotic pasture grasses. Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society B: Biological Sciences, 368(1619), 20120427."

Text in quotes are direct quotes from the source
Text in square brackets was added by the assessor to clarify something or to summarize from a figure.
Text preceded by a “#” is comment from the assessor

The data presented were assembled from literature and database searches for each species using as much data as could be collected regarding the plant’s fire ecology under natural

conditions. Searches aimed to be exhaustive and consist of as much data as could be located in 2020. Our machine learning algorithm was trained on 49 species of plants which had their fire risk ranked by 49 managers in Hawai'i in November 2020. The model used a conditional random forest regression algorithm to predict scores for each species using the manager score as the response variable and the fire ecology traits of each plant as the predictor variables to generate a fire risk score. This trained model was then used to predict the fire risk for all species which were not ranked by managers. The model was calibrated such that it is 90% accurate at predicting high fire risk plants and 79% accurate at predicting low fire risk plants. This research and the resulting fire risk model has been published in the journal Biological Invasions by Kevin Faccenda and Curt Daehler (both at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa).

Note that the analysis doesn't account for a plant species' spatial distribution, population density, or distinct climate and ecosystem conditions (which can also influence fire risk). The fire risk of these species are mostly under "worst case" environmental conditions where the climate is dry enough to maintain fire, but wet enough to allow for plant growth and fuel accumulation. The fire risk ranking should not be taken as a stand-alone risk metric in prioritizing weed control efforts. Rather, this information may also be useful for determining if a newly discovered species poses a potential fire threat in wildland areas.

More general information on the weed risks and ecology of non-native plants in Hawai'i is available from the Hawai'i Invasive Species Committee's Weed Risk Assessment database.

View more fact sheets at https://www.pacificfireexchange.org/weed-fire-risk-assessments

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Fact sheet prepared by Kevin Faccenda (faccenda@hawaii.edu) in November 2021. Data were prepared by Kevin Faccenda in 2020.

This research was funded by the Department of the Interior Pacific Islands Climate Adaptation Science Center. The project described in this publication was supported by Grant or Cooperative Agreement No.G20AC00073 to Curt Daehler from the United States Geological Survey. The views and conclusions contained in this document are those of the authors and should not be interpreted as representing the opinions or policies of the U.S. Geological Survey. Mention of trade names or commercial products does not constitute their endorsement by the Pacific Islands Climate Adaptation Science Center or the National Climate Adaptation Science Center or the US Geological Survey.