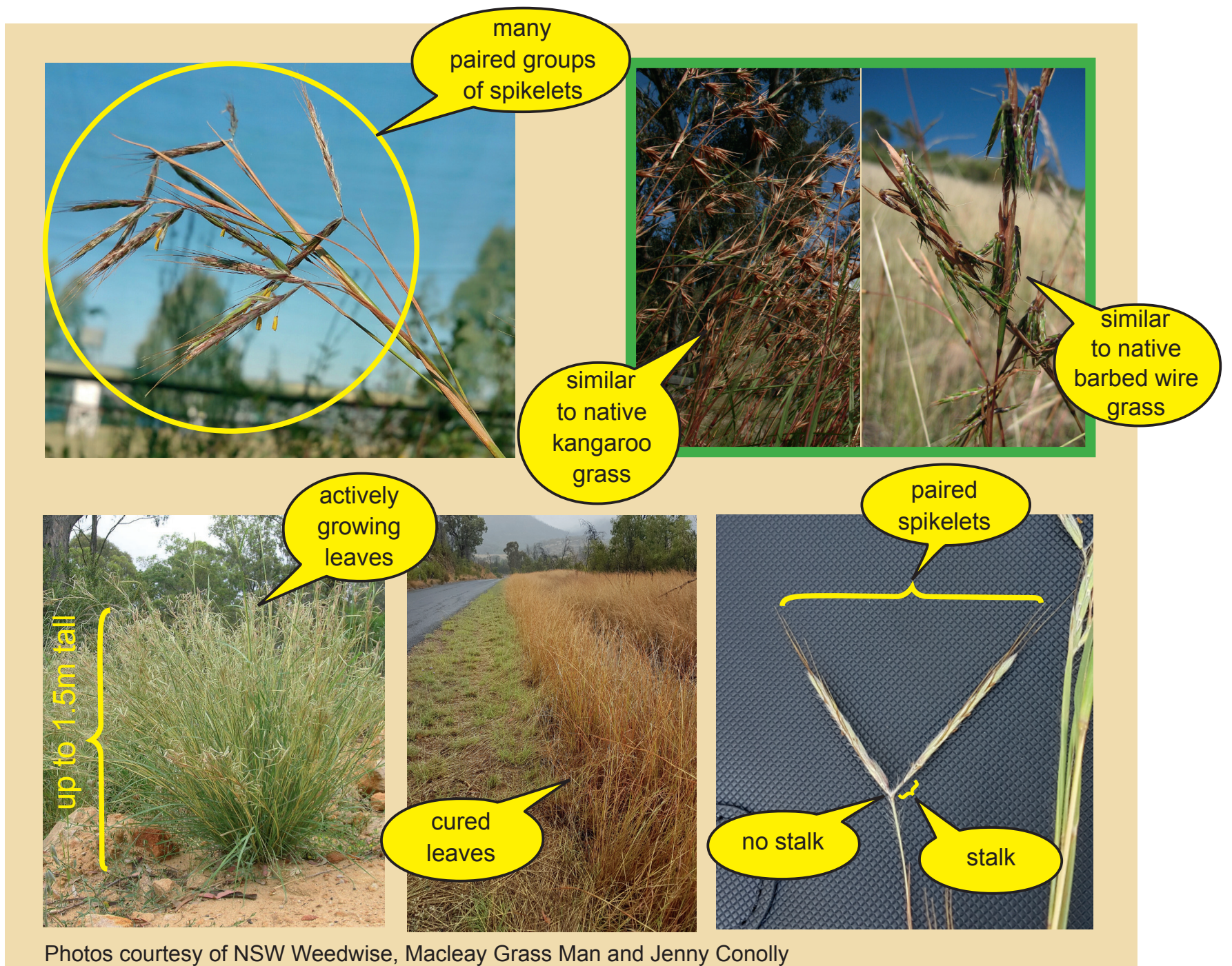


Coolatai grass

Hyparrhenia hirta



Photos courtesy of NSW Weedwise, Macleay Grass Man and Jenny Conolly

Highly invasive of grassland, woodland and pasture, Coolatai grass is a drought, fire and herbicide tolerant tussock grass from Africa. It has become a major invasive species in northern New South Wales (NSW) and is spreading southwards. Infestations have been discovered to the north and south of the ACT. Coolatai grass is capable of invading undisturbed natural ecosystems and is a major threat to biodiversity in nature reserves and national parks. It is also a threat to grazing productivity due to low levels of protein and digestibility.

Distinguishing features

Erect, tufted grass to 1.5 metres tall. Leaves and stems are blue-green and have a waxy bloom that can be rubbed off. Flower heads have many paired spikelets. White hairs are visible at the base of the paired spikelets. One of the spikelets is stalked, the other is unstaked. Bristles or awns are also present at the end of the spikelets. When actively growing the leaves are a blue-green colour. In winter, leaves cure and turn brown. Leaves and seed heads could be mistaken for native barbed wire grass (*Cymbopogon refractus*) and leaves look similar to native kangaroo grass (*Themeda triandra*).

What to do if you see it

Report sightings to Canberra Nature Map <http://canberra.naturemapr.org/> with a close up photograph. An automatic alert will be sent to the High Risk Invasive Plants Team.



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