Axonopus fissifolius

Scientific Name

Axonopus fissifolius (Raddi) Kuhlm.

Synonyms

Axonopus affinis Chase
Paspalum fissifolium Raddi

Family

Gramineae (South Australia)
Poaceae (Queensland, New South Wales, the ACT, Victoria, Tasmania, Western Australia and the Northern Territory)

Common Names

carpet grass, common carpet grass, common carpetgrass, caratao grass, narrow leaved carpetgrass, narrowleaf carpet grass, narrow-leaved carpet grass, narrow-leaved carpetgrass, Swazi grass

Origin

Native to North America (i.e. southern and eastern USA and Mexico), Central America (i.e. Belize, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua and Panama) and South America (i.e. Guyana, Venezuela, Brazil, Bolivia, Colombia, Argentina, Paraguay and Uruguay).

Naturalised Distribution

Widely naturalised in northern, eastern and southern Australia (i.e. in south-eastern, central and northern Queensland, in eastern and southern New South Wales, in the ACT, in many parts of Victoria, in south-eastern South Australia and in northern and south-western Western Australia). It is most common in the coastal districts of eastern Australia. Also naturalised on Norfolk Island and in many other parts of the world.

Notes

This species is regarded as an environmental weed in some parts of New South Wales (e.g. in the wider Sydney and Blue Mountains region), Western Australia and eastern Queensland. It is sometimes cultivated as a lawn grass and is common in degraded pastures in southern Queensland and northern New South Wales. It is also a weed of parks, gardens, disturbed sites, roadsides and natural habitats such as open woodlands, floodplains, riparian zones and wetlands.

Narrow-leaved carpet grass (Axonopus fissifolius) is listed as a principal weed species affecting river-flat eucalypt forests on the coastal floodplains of New South Wales, an endangered ecological community in this state. It has also been recorded in bushland in conservation areas in the Sydney (e.g. Manly Warringah War Memorial Park) and Blue Mountains (i.e. Tunnel Gully Reserve) regions.

Narrow-leaved carpet grass (Axonopus fissifolius) is also a weed of disturbed corridors that are created for powerlines and road networks in rainforests in the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area in northern Queensland and has been recorded in swampy areas in northern Western Australia. On Norfolk Island, where this species was introduced as a pasture and lawn grass, it forms a dense mat that crowds out other species and in Hawaii it is common in wet pastures, disturbed wet forests and boggy areas.

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close-up of flower spikelets (Photo: Sheldon Navie)

mature seed-head (Photo: Sheldon Navie)

young plant (Photo: Sheldon Navie)

seed-head with four slender branches (Photo: Jackie Miles and Max Campbell)