Chloris barbata

Scientific Name

*Chloris barbata Sw*

Synonyms

*Andropogon barbatus L.*

*Chloris barbata Sw.*

Family

Gramineae (South Australia)

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

Common Names

airport grass, Mexican blue grass, purple top chloris, purple top Rhodes grass, purple-top chloris, purpletop chloris, purple-top Rhodes grass, purpletop Rhodes grass, swollen finger grass, swollen fingergrass, swollen windmill grass

Origin

This species is widespread in the tropics and sub-tropics, and its exact origin is uncertain. It is most likely native to Central and South America or perhaps south-eastern Asia.

Naturalised Distribution

Widely naturalised in northern Australia (i.e. in northern, central and south-eastern Queensland, northern and north-western Western Australia, north-eastern South Australia and many parts of the Northern Territory). Also naturalised on Christmas Island and on the Cocos Islands.

Naturalised overseas in southern USA (i.e. Florida and Texas) and on numerous Pacific islands.

Notes

Purpletop Rhodes grass (*Chloris inflata*) is an environmental weed in central and northern Queensland, the Northern Territory and northern Western Australia. In the northern regions of Australia it is an aggressive invader of degraded land and coastal sites. It is actively managed by community groups in the Northern Territory. This species is primarily found along roadsides and footpaths, in disturbed sites and waste areas, and in pastures. It spreads from these initial locations into natural habitats, where it out-competes native species.
young seed-head (Photo: Sheldon Navie)

seed-head in flower (Photo: Sheldon Navie)

young plant (Photo: Sheldon Navie)

comparison of the growth habit of purpletop Rhodes grass (Chloris inflata), on the left, and Rhodes grass (Chloris gayana), on the right (Photo: Sheldon Navie)

comparison of the young seed-heads of purpletop Rhodes grass (Chloris inflata), on the left, Rhodes grass (Chloris gayana), in the centre, and feathertop Rhodes grass (Chloris virgata), on the right (Photo: Sheldon Navie)
mature seed-head releasing its 'seeds' (Photo: Sheldon Navie)

close-up of 'seeds' (Photo: Jose Hernandez at USDA PLANTS Database)

comparison of the young seed-heads of purpletop Rhodes grass (Chloris inflata), on the left, Rhodes grass (Chloris gayana), in the centre, and feathertop Rhodes grass (Chloris virgata), on the right (Photo: Sheldon Navie)