

# Panicum repens

## Recognize the problem

Family: Poaceae (grass family).

Common names: Torpedo grass, bullet grass, couch panicum, creeping panic grass, quack grass.

**Thai:** หญ้าชันกาด Ya channakat (Central); เขม่น้ำ Khaem man, หญ้าอ่อนน้อย Ya o noi (Chiang Mai); **Vietnamese:** Cỏ gừng, cỏ ống; **Burmese:** Myet-kyein, Myet-kha.

Perennial grass with flowering stems (up to 1m high) arising from robust, creeping underground stems (rhizomes) with sharp-pointed (torpedo-like) tips; nodes of the underground stems often swollen with viable bud.

Leaves: Green, stiff; flat or folded along central vein (7–25 cm long and 2–8 mm wide), with sometimes a whitish, waxy covering on the underside; leaves occur in two opposite ranks along the stem.

Inflorescences: Branched (7–22 cm long) with upward-pointing flowerheads ('branches', each ca. 2-19 cm long) set alternating along tip of flowering stem.

## Background

Origin: Tropical and North Africa, Mediterranean.

Introduction: For forage.

Habitat: Humid tropics and moist sub-tropics; *P. repens* prefers wet habitats; it grows well on moist, coastal, sandy soils and in upland crop fields; tolerant to drought and temporarily flooded conditions.

Spread: Primarily by rhizome fragments; viable seeds rarely produced.

Invades: Perennial plantation crops, annual crops with insufficiently deep tillage, disturbed land, wasteland, drainage ditches, irrigation channels, lowlands, floodplains, wetlands, gullies, lake and river edges, roadsides.

Impacts: It is a serious weed in a wide range of perennial crops including sugarcane in Taiwan and Hawaii, pineapple in West Africa, tea in India, Indonesia and Sri Lanka, various orchard crops in Thailand, rubber, coconut and oil palm in Malaysia, and rice in Indonesia and Sri Lanka. It is also a landscape weed in Vietnam. Rhizome density can reach 15 tonnes per hectare, while a density of 5 tonnes per hectare can result in a 50% reduction in sugarcane yield. The weed is also reported to suppress the germination and growth of other plants. *Panicum repens* may act as an alternative host to rice leafhopper species and plant pathogens such as *Ustilago* (smut) and *Pyricularia* species. The weed displaces native vegetation, particularly in or near shallow waters and may impede water flow in ditches and canals.

Scientific name(s) > *Panicum repens* (*P. arenarium*, *P. chromatostigma*, *P. ischaemoides*, *P. leiogonum*)

*P. repens* grows in clumps of 1m in height. (Photo by © Ronnchai Changsri)



*P. repens* growth habit. (Photo by ©Forest and Kim Starr/flickr)



The recommendations in this factsheet are relevant to: All Countries



Authors: CABI. Edited by participants from Thailand, Myanmar and Vietnam at a workshop in Thailand, March 2016  
CABI  
tel: +60 (0)3 894329321 email: cabisea@cabi.org

Edited by Plantwise.