

Different types of native grassland

There are several types of native grassland in Tasmania, including:

- Kangaroo grass (*Themeda triandra*) dominates grasslands in lowland valleys and well-drained slopes on fertile soils. They often contain a wide range of native herbs and native grasses, many of which are nutritious for stock.
- Silver tussock grasslands are generally the easiest native grasslands to identify due to the obvious abundance of tall tussocks of *Poa labillardierei*. They occur on river flats and floodplains, hillsides and ridges, in both the lowlands and the highlands.
- Wallaby-grass grasslands may have some native tussock grasses or kangaroo grass present, but are dominated by wallaby grasses (*Austrodanthonia species*). Other native grasses may also be present, including weeping grass or microlaena (*Ehrharta stipoides*) and native speargrasses (*Austrostipa species*). These grasslands are the most widespread native grasslands in Tasmania and many are derived from clearing woodlands and have a history of management for stock grazing.
- Coastal grasslands dominated by coast tussock (*Poa poiformis*) and coast speargrass (*Austrostipa stipoides*) commonly occur on sand dunes and on exposed headlands around Tasmania and the Bass Strait islands. Coast fescue (*Austrofestuca littoralis*) and spinifex (*Spinifex sericeus*) also form coastal grasslands.

Protecting Tasmania's Native Grasslands

Native grasslands are diverse vegetation types that provide important functions at both the farm and the catchment level. They underpin the long-term productivity, profitability and sustainability of stock grazing on many properties in Tasmania. Native grasslands are a valuable asset, being persistent and permanent pastures that have been sustainably managed over many generations. These pastures are drought-tolerant, productive and low maintenance, providing feed for stock throughout the year.

The Non-Forest Vegetation Project is a new initiative by government to build partnerships with landowners in managing threatened non-forest native vegetation, including some native grasslands. The project is not aimed at all native grasslands but only those that are threatened (rare, vulnerable or endangered). Lowland grasslands dominated by kangaroo grass or silver tussock, and highland grasslands dominated by silver tussock are all considered endangered in Tasmania, with at least 90% of their original area cleared.

How to find out more or have input



Tasmania

DEPARTMENT of
PRIMARY INDUSTRIES,
WATER and ENVIRONMENT

Contact Louise Gilfedder (Team Leader)

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Or look on the DPIWE website

www.dpiwe.tas.gov.au



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Non-Forest Vegetation Project





Non-Forest Vegetation Project

The Non-Forest Vegetation Project is working with landowners to provide for the long-term management of native grasslands, providing benefits for conservation and primary production. The approach is to develop voluntary agreements with landowners for managing non-forest native vegetation. These agreements do not “lock-up” areas but will recognise many current sustainable grazing and fire management practices. The project will offer financial incentives and a range of management tools for conserving non-forest vegetation.

More information about the project is found in the brochure *Protecting Tasmania's Threatened Non-Forest Native Vegetation*.



Tasmania's native grasslands

Native pastures, natural pastures and native grasslands are all common terms used by graziers to describe a landscape that is dominated by native grasses. Native grasslands may contain a wide range of native herbs and grasses, as well as some exotic (non-native) plants such as annual and perennial grasses, broadleaf weeds and clover. Some scattered trees and shrubs such as eucalypts, wattles and prickly box may be present. It is important to remember that we are talking about the grasslands and not just the individual grass species. Individual or scattered tussocks of kangaroo grass or silver tussock are not the focus of the project.

The grasses that dominate native pastures are well adapted to the Tasmanian environment, generally being both drought and frost tolerant. Native grasses like wallaby grasses and weeping grass are productive and highly palatable to stock. They are also generally resistant to pasture pests such as corbie grubs and cockchafer. Because most of Tasmania's native grass species are perennial plants, they play an important role in maintaining soil health and ground cover. During summer and autumn they protect the soil from erosion and reduce the risks of salinisation by utilising water deep in the soil profile.

