



Buffelgrass  
(*Pennisetum ciliare*,  
*Cenchrus ciliaris*):

Buffelgrass (*Pennisetum ciliare*, *Cenchrus ciliaris*), is the archenemy of the Sonoran Desert-- the invasive grass most likely to cause significant damage to the native ecosystem. Buffelgrass is native to Africa, Asia, and the Middle East. This grass was intentionally brought to arid portions of the U.S. beginning in the 1930s and was planted for

cattle forage and erosion control because of its drought tolerance and high seed production.

In dry climates throughout the world, buffelgrass escaped from where it was planted and has established in places where it is unwanted -- natural areas, city parks, roadsides, and private property. In the U.S., buffelgrass has been recorded in California, Arizona, New Mexico, Texas, Oklahoma, Missouri, Louisiana, Florida, New York, Hawai'i, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands. In some areas, such as the Sonoran Desert of Arizona, buffelgrass is a highly invasive non-native weed and is officially listed and regulated as a noxious weed.

Buffelgrass is native to Africa and countries in the Middle East and Asia, where it grows in savanna grasslands with sparse trees. Frequent fires are part of the savanna's natural ecosystem processes, and the trees and grasses there have adapted to survive hot fires.

Buffelgrass was brought to the southwest by the U.S. Soil Conservation Service for cattle forage and erosion control. Several varieties of buffelgrass were planted in test fields in southern Arizona. Buffelgrass was also widely planted around Tucson for erosion control in the 1970's and 1980's. It is the "common" variety, or T-4464, that established the best and has since proliferated across southern Arizona. That variety was collected in the Turkana Desert in Kenya in the 1940's.