

BOTANICAL NAME:  
**Pennisetum villosum**  
(Sometimes listed as  
genus Cenchrus)

COMMON NAMES:  
**African Feathertop,**  
**Showy Feathertop**

FAMILY: Poaceae (Gramineae)

ORIGIN: Africa



C203-11

Reason for listing as potentially  
invasive species:

Perennial grass that tolerates many soil conditions and climates. It needs no water and tolerates full sun. It is mostly found growing in disturbed areas. "Plant feather top with caution in mild climates, as it may become weedy with improper maintenance. In areas of pristine native plant habitats, other choices may be more appropriate. It self-sows prolifically in southern and western gardens.<sup>1</sup>" It is also invasive in Hawaii and Arizona, use with extreme caution.<sup>2,3</sup>

Methods of invading natural  
areas:

seed, vegetatively, wildlife, water/storm drains

Habitat types it invades:

disturbed areas

Where invasive in Southern  
California:

mostly found in disturbed areas<sup>4</sup>

Potentially invasive varieties  
include:

all species and varieties of named species

Varieties not known to be  
invasive:

Alternative plants to consider:

California native species:

*Aristida purpurea*  
*Festuca californica*  
*Nassella pulchra*

Purple Three-awn  
California Fescue  
Purple Needlegrass

Non-native species:

*Helictotrichon sempervirens*

Blue Oat Grass

<sup>1</sup> Greenlee, J. 1992. *The Encyclopedia of Ornamental Grasses*, p. 138.

<sup>2</sup> Pacific Islands Ecosystems at Risk website as accessed on the World Wide Web on June 1<sup>st</sup>, 2007. [http://www.hear.org/pier/species/pennisetum\\_villosum.htm](http://www.hear.org/pier/species/pennisetum_villosum.htm)

<sup>3</sup> Arizona Native Plant Society Grow Native Don't Plant a Pest Brochure as accessed on the World Wide Web on June 1<sup>st</sup>, 2007. [http://www.aznps.org/html/main\\_pages/fountain\\_grass.htm](http://www.aznps.org/html/main_pages/fountain_grass.htm)

<sup>4</sup> Data provided by the participants of the Consortium of California Herbaria as accessed on the World Wide Web April 25th, 2007. [www.ucjeps.berkeley.edu/consortium/](http://www.ucjeps.berkeley.edu/consortium/)