



**HAVE YOU SEEN THIS PLANT?**  
It is an Emergent Invasive in Orange County



**NATALGRASS**

aka Ruby Grass,  
Ruby Redtop  
*Zacate Rosado*

***Melinis repens***  
(= *Rhynchelytrum repens*)

[Known OC Sites & Status Updates](#)

Distribution map & info:

- [calflora.org/cgi-bin/species\\_query.cgi?where-calrecnum=12147](http://calflora.org/cgi-bin/species_query.cgi?where-calrecnum=12147)



Natalgrass is a stout, erect grass to about 30" tall.

- Native to southern Africa but now found throughout the subtropics, including southern California.
- Has been grown as an ornamental, as forage, & for soil stabilization.
- Can be annual or perennial, depending on moisture availability & temperature.
- Grows best in open, disturbed areas: roadsides, railways, parks, gardens, footpaths, waste areas, pastures & crops.
- Will invade undisturbed natural vegetation.
- Resprouts quickly after a fire then burns readily again. Its presence thus affects the number & frequency of fires & negatively affects native habitats.





Natalgrass is a prolific seed producer. Under favorable conditions, it can flower throughout the year & its seeds will germinate readily. Seeds can also remain viable in the soil for up to a year.

The abundant and distinctive reddish or purplish seed-heads fade to pinkish or silvery as the seed ripens and have many 1/8" silky hairs. The 'seed' (i.e. a caryopsis or grain) is egg-shaped in outline, flattened, light brown in color, & about 1/16" long.

Seeds are mostly wind-dispersed. They can also be dispersed by sticking to clothing & animals, by mud on vehicles & boots, & as a contaminant in agricultural products & seed.



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### IF YOU SEE THIS PLANT AT A SITE THAT'S NOT ON THE LIST:

- Record the plant's location as exactly as you can (GPS coordinates if possible), the date you saw it, and an estimate of how many there were. Include the site's landowner or manager, if known.
- Take identifying photos: the whole plant & its surroundings, closeups of leaves, flowers & fruits/pods.
- If you take a sample, place it immediately into a sealed bag.
- To avoid spreading the plant, check your clothing and shoes thoroughly before leaving the area, and remove and bag all traces of seeds.
- Report the find immediately to [invasives@occnps.org](mailto:invasives@occnps.org).