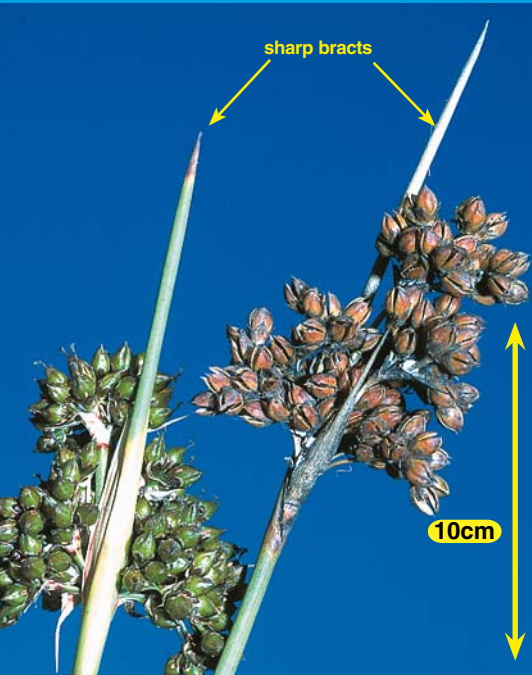


SPINY RUSH

Juncus acutus

R1
RUSH



SPINY RUSH

Juncus acutus

Sustainable
Grazing on
Saline Land



SALTdeck Series

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R1

Alternative names: Sharp Rush, Sharp-pointed Rush. **Family:** Juncaceae.

Description: Tussock forming perennial rush to 1.6 m tall. Flowering stems (culms) are round in cross section and filled with pith. Flowers are clustered at the top of the stem and each flowerhead contains thousands of brown seeds. Flowers summer through winter.

Key features: Stiff sharp-pointed bract extending a few cm beyond the cluster of flowers (see photo). This bract will pierce skin if not handled gently. Seeds have tails (see photo), unlike other species of *Juncus* growing in this saline habitat—but you need a hand lens to see this feature. Readily distinguished by its robust, strongly erect stems and sharp bracts at the end of the stems.

Dispersal: By movement of seed. Much of the spread appears to be by contaminated mud.

Value: Only eaten by stock when young and when other more palatable plants are absent.

Salinity and waterlogging tolerance: Research has found that seedlings do not tolerate high salt levels in water and soil and this probably explains why Spiny Rush does not invade very salty areas. Mature plants will withstand long periods of inundation. It will thrive in inundated creek lines and freshwater or saline depressions provided salt levels are less than sea strength salinity.

Notes: Native of Europe, Africa and North America. Generally an undesirable weed that excludes other salt zone plants. Declared noxious in some localities. Produces huge numbers of seed that germinate readily under suitable conditions.

References: *Noxious Weeds of Australia*, Parsons and Cuthbertson, 1992. *Waterplants in Australia*, Sainty and Jacobs, 2003.

