

Asclepias curassavica

COMMON NAME

Blood flower, tropical milkweed

FAMILY

Asclepiadaceae

AUTHORITY

Asclepias curassavica L.

FLORA CATEGORY

Vascular – Exotic

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Trees & Shrubs - Dicotyledons

CONSERVATION STATUS

Not applicable

HABITAT

An uncommon casual. Mainly an urban weed of derelict land, ill kept gardens and street pavements, clogged gutters, parks and similar wasteland within built up areas. Occasionally locally abundant, as on Rangitoto Island where in 1995 it was once the dominant species in an old quarry pit - it has not been seen there since.

FLOWER COLOURS

Orange, Red/Pink

ORIGIN

South America

ETYMOLOGY

asclepias: After Asclepius, a Greek from the 6th century BC who was learned in the medicinal properties of plants

Reason For Introduction

Mainly ornamental (as food for Monarch Butterflies)

Life Cycle Comments

Short-lived perennial - often annual in New Zealand

Reproduction

Exclusively by seed

Seed

Long-lived forms a large seed bank

Dispersal

Wind dispersed. Also deliberately moved by Humans as a food source for Monarch Butterflies

Tolerances

Cold intolerant. Once established rather drought tolerant.

MORE INFORMATION

<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/asclepias-curassavica/>



Wild plant on margin of ill kept garden, Mt Albert, Auckland. Photographer: Peter J. de Lange, Date taken: 31/12/2006, Licence: CC BY-NC.