

# Ammophila arenaria

## COMMON NAME

marram grass

## FAMILY

Poaceae

## AUTHORITY

*Ammophila arenaria* (L.) Link

## FLORA CATEGORY

Vascular – Exotic

## STRUCTURAL CLASS

Grasses

## NVS CODE

AMMARE

## CONSERVATION STATUS

Not applicable

## HABITAT

Terrestrial. Coastal plant, usually occurs on sand dunes, can occur in inland sites with low fertility.

## FEATURES

Stout rhizomatous perennial grass. Rhizomes tough, creeping long distances in loose sand. Compact tufts formed, 1 m+ high. Leaves to 700 x 3-6 mm, greyish-green, tips sharp, reddish-brown sheaths overlapping; blades tightly rolled (appear cylindrical) in exposed conditions, loosely rolled in shade; densely hairy ribs above, striped below, narrow ligule 25 mm long. Seedhead a dense spike, whitish, to 30 cm long.

## SIMILAR TAXA

*Leymus racemosus* is more robust, foliage less bluish. *Austrofestuca littoralis* native sand tussock can be confused with small marram plants.

## FLOWERING

November, December, January, February, March

## FLOWER COLOURS

Green, Yellow

## FRUITING

Unknown

## LIFE CYCLE

Perennial. Can spread large distances via seed. Low amounts of seed are produced. Seed viability is low, with no contribution to the seed bank. Vegetative reproduction occurs rapidly through extensive rhizomatic growth. The plant achieves this by trapping sand and growing through it, changing how natural sand dunes are formed, in contrast to native pingao (*Ficinia spiralis*) which holds and releases sand more readily to resupply beaches. Seed is dispersed by wind. Direct spread from extending rhizomes, seed and rhizome fragments spread by wind and water, deliberate planting by people for sand dune

## YEAR NATURALISED

1873

## ORIGIN

Europe, North Africa



Marram. Photographer: John Barkla



Whitiau Scenic Reserve, Wanganui. Jan 2000.  
Photographer: Colin Ogle

### REASON FOR INTRODUCTION

Agricultural (to stabilise sand dunes which were mobilised once native vegetation had been removed).

### TOLERANCES

Highly tolerant to drought and is virtually unpalatable to grazing stock. Intolerant to shade.

### ETYMOLOGY

**arenaria:** Sand dweller

### MORE INFORMATION

<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/ammophila-arenaria/>