

Arum italicum

COMMON NAME

Italian arum

FAMILY

Araceae

AUTHORITY

Arum italicum Mill.

FLORA CATEGORY

Vascular – Exotic

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Monocotyledonous Herbs

NVS CODE

ARUITA

CONSERVATION STATUS

Not assessed

HABITAT

Heavily disturbed shrubland and forest, herbfield, damp areas with low cover, regenerating ex-pasture.

FEATURES

Tuberous, clump-forming perennial 25-60 cm tall. Main tuber 4 cm diameter, many small tubers attached. Leaves up to 30 cm long, arrow shaped (young leaves thinner), glossy, dark-green with creamy midrib and main veins, purple-tinged, present from Autumn to Spring. Flower a yellow spike, surrounded by a 30 x 15 cm, pale green translucent bract. Berries 1 cm, orange or red, on flower stalk after leaves die back.

SIMILAR TAXA

May be confused with *Zantedeschia aethiopica*, or other lilly species (*Calla*, *Dracunculus*) but the dark green leaves with creamy mid-rib and veins are very distinctive.

FLOWERING

October, November

FLOWER COLOURS

Yellow

FRUITING

November, December

YEAR NATURALISED

1945

ORIGIN

Eurasia

ETYMOLOGY

arum: From the Greek word aron which means 'climbing' or 'poisonous plant'.



Arum italicum plant. Photographer: John Smith-Dodsworth



Arum italicum close up of leaf, Western Springs, Motat Grounds, June 2006. Photographer: Peter de Lange

Reason For Introduction

Ornamental

Life Cycle Comments

Perennial.

Reproduction

Spreads via seed and slow vegetative spread.

Dispersal

Probably bird dispersed.

Tolerances

drought resistant once established.

Poisonous plant:

All parts of the plant are poisonous including the bright orange berries.

MORE INFORMATION

<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/arum-italicum/>