

Asclepias curassavica

COMMON NAMES

Blood flower, tropical milkweed

BIOSTATUS

Exotic

CONSERVATION STATUS

Not applicable

CATEGORY

Vascular

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Trees & Shrubs - Dicotyledons

FLOWER COLOURS

Orange, Red/Pink

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.

GENUS

Asclepias

FAMILY

Asclepiadaceae

AUTHORITY

Asclepias curassavica L.

ORIGIN

South America

REASON FOR INTRODUCTION

Mainly ornamental (as food for introduced monarch butterflies, *Danaus plexippus*)

TOLERANCES

Cold intolerant. Once established rather drought tolerant.

LIFE CYCLE AND DISPERSAL

Short-lived perennial - often annual in New Zealand. Reproduces exclusively by seed. Seed is long-lived and forms a large seed bank. Dispersed by wind and also deliberately moved by humans as a food source for introduced monarch butterflies.

ETYMOLOGY

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

MORE INFORMATION

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

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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.