Cortaderia jubata

COMMON NAMES
purple pampas grass

BIOSTATUS
Exotic

CONSERVATION STATUS
Not applicable

CATEGORY
Vascular

STRUCTURAL CLASS
Grasses

FLOWER COLOURS
Violet/Purple

DETAILED DESCRIPTION
Large-clump-forming grass to 3 m+. **Leaf base** very hairy, no white waxy surface. **Leaves** with conspicuous midrib which does not continue into leaf base, no secondary veins between midrib and leaf edge; both leaf surfaces dark green, snap readily when tugged; dead leaf bases spiral like wood shavings. **Flowerhead** erect, dense, uniform, fluffy, bright purple, fading to dirty brown.

SIMILAR TAXA
Can be separated from native toetoe (*Austroderia* spp.) by the prominent single midrib on the leaves (native cortaderia have several prominent veins, making their leaves difficult to tear across). Can be separated from *C. selloana* by the hairy leaf bases, and the white (to pale pink) flowering spike extends further from the clump.

HABITAT
Terrestrial. Forest light gaps, slips, margins, disturbed sites, open habitats, riverbeds, cliffs, inshore and offshore islands, tussockland, fernland, herbfield, duneland, coastline, gumlands, salt marsh, estuaries, shrublands.

GENUS
Cortaderia

FAMILY
Poaceae

AUTHORITY
Cortaderia jubata (Lemoine) Stapf

ENDEMIC FAMILY
No

FLOWERING
January, February, March

FRUITING
March–April (Timmins & MacKenzie 1995).

YEAR NATURALISED
1965



North of Silverstream Scenic Reserve, Upper Hutt. Photographer: Jeremy R. Rolfe, Date taken: 05/04/2006, Licence: CC BY.



Leaf blade with prominent midrib but no lateral ribs. North of Stokes Valley, Lower Hutt. Photographer: Jeremy R. Rolfe, Date taken: 16/04/2006, Licence: CC BY.

ORIGIN
South America

REASON FOR INTRODUCTION
Cortaderia jubata

TOLERANCES
Adult plants are tolerant of drought and frost, prefers high light. Seedlings are intolerant to drought and slightly tolerant of frost, slightly intolerant to intolerant of poor drainage.

LIFE CYCLE AND DISPERSAL
Perennial. Seed germination occurs in autumn. The plants breeding system is autonomous apomixis and the flower type is apomictic. All plants are female and all flowers are capable of producing seed without pollination. Reproduction primarily by seed but clumps can get quite large. All plants are female but viable seed is produced by apomixis. Seed production is high, averaging one million per inflorescence in first year of flowering. It is unlikely that this plant forms a long term seed bank.
Seed is dispersed by gravity, man, vertebrates, machinery, in gravel and by wind. The seed is very light and is wind dispersed up to 50km.

NATIONAL PEST PLANT ACCORD SPECIES
This plant is listed in the 2020 National Pest Plant Accord. The National Pest Plant Accord (NPPA) is an agreement to prevent the sale and/or distribution of specified pest plants where either formal or casual horticultural trade is the most significant way of spreading the plant in New Zealand. For up to date information and an electronic copy of the 2020 Pest Plant Accord manual (including plant information and images) visit the MPI website.

ENVIRONMENTAL WEED (2024)
This plant is named in a list of 386 environmental weeds in New Zealand 2024 prepared by DOC. 759 candidate species were considered for inclusion on this new comprehensive list of environmental weeds in New Zealand. The species considered were drawn from published lists of weed species, lists of plants that must be reported or managed by law if observed, existing national and regional programmes and agreements for pest management, and species already managed by the Department of Conservation (DOC). Candidate species were then assessed to see if they were fully naturalised and whether they have more than minor impacts in natural ecosystems. Read the full report here.

NVS CODE
CORJUB

REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING
Timmins SM, Mackenzie IW. 1995. Weeds in New Zealand Protected Natural Areas database. *Department of Conservation Technical Series 8*. Department of Conservation, Wellington, NZ. 282 p.

MORE INFORMATION
https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/cortaderia-jubata/

PDF DATE
25 May 2026