

# Fraxinus excelsior

## COMMON NAMES

ash

## BIOSTATUS

Exotic

## CONSERVATION STATUS

Not applicable

## CATEGORY

Vascular

## STRUCTURAL CLASS

Trees & Shrubs - Dicotyledons

## FLOWER COLOURS

Violet/Purple

## DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Large tree to about 30 m. Leaves alternate, with 9-13 leaflets on petioles to about 8 cm long. Leaflets to about 10 x 3.5 cm, lanceolate with serrate margins. The flowers are very small and purple, lack petals, and appear before the leaves with male and female flowers on separate trees. The single-winged seeds hang in dense clusters from the branches.

## SIMILAR TAXA

Several species of Ash are cultivated in New Zealand. *F. excelsior* can be separated by the large number of leaflets, and green mid-veins.

## HABITAT

Terrestrial. riverflats, forest, scrub and waste places.

## GENUS

*Fraxinus*

## FAMILY

Oleaceae

## AUTHORITY

*Fraxinus excelsior* L.

## ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

## FLOWERING

September, October

## YEAR NATURALISED

1904

## ORIGIN

Europe, W. Asia, N.Africa

## REASON FOR INTRODUCTION

Ornamental

## LIFE CYCLE AND DISPERSAL

Many seeds are produced but wild plants are rare. Seed viability unknown. Dispersed by wind and people.



*Fraxinus excelsior*. Photographer: John Smith-Dodsworth, Licence: CC BY-NC.



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## ETYMOLOGY

**fraxinus:** From the Latin name for ash, possibly derived from the Greek phrasso 'to fence', the timber being very useful for fence making.

## 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

FRAEXC

## MORE INFORMATION

<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/fraxinus-excelsior/>

## PDF DATE

25 May 2026