

Furcraea foetida

COMMON NAMES

Mauritius hemp

BIOSTATUS

Exotic

CONSERVATION STATUS

Not applicable

CATEGORY

Vascular

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Herbs - Monocots

FLOWER COLOURS

Green, Yellow

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Perennial monocotyledon with fleshy leaves up to 3 m tall, in the agave family. The leaves may or may not be spiny. Flower spikes of up to c. 12 m tall are produced from the centre of each plant. Fruit have not been recorded from the plants on Raoul Island (Sykes 1980), but on the flower spikes numerous small bulbils (vegetative dispersal units) are produced. (West 1996)

SIMILAR TAXA

Does not die after flowering unlike *Agave americana*. *F. foetida* can be distinguished from *F. longaeva* by the entire leaf margins and glabrous branches on flowering spike.

HABITAT

Terrestrial.

GENUS

Furcraea

FAMILY

Agavaceae

AUTHORITY

Furcraea foetida (L.) Haw.

FLOWERING

October

YEAR NATURALISED

1966

ORIGIN

South America, Brazil

REASON FOR INTRODUCTION

Agricultural

LIFE CYCLE AND DISPERSAL

Perennial. Reproduces vegetatively (seed not observed in New Zealand). The bulbils drop off and roll away or land on pohutukawa branches and sprout. (West 1996). It is considered to have significant affect on indigenous communities in the long term, though it can't spread quickly (Ewen Cameron 1996).



Furcraea foetida. Photographer: Bec Stanley, Licence: CC BY-SA.



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ETYMOLOGY

foetida: Stinking

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](#).

MORE INFORMATION

<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/furcraea-foetida/>

PDF DATE

27 May 2026