

Hedychium gardnerianum

COMMON NAMES

wild ginger, kahili ginger

BIOSTATUS

Exotic

CONSERVATION STATUS

Not applicable

CATEGORY

Vascular

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Herbs - Monocots

FLOWER COLOURS

Red/Pink, Yellow

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Non-woody perennial to 2 m tall, ginger-scented. Rhizomes massive, taro-like, close to ground surface, long, shallow rooted, much-branched, growing over each other, forming deep beds. Rhizome segments 4 x 10 cm, each producing an aerial stem usually annually. Stems to 2 m, erect, soft, unbranched, thickening to short pinkish collar at base. Leaves alternate, 20-45 x 10-15 cm, shiny, slightly hanging. Flowerhead 25-45 cm tall with many flowers, Jan-Mar. Flowers lemon-yellow with conspicuous red stamens, fragrant. Fruiting spike with fleshy orange fruits, 15-20 mm long, containing many bright scarlet seeds.

SIMILAR TAXA

Similar to *H. flavescens* (yellow ginger), *Zingiber spectabile* (culinary ginger) and *Canna* spp. but the leaves of *H. gardnerianum* are much broader than other gingers, and the tall flower heads of *H. gardnerianum* make it distinctive from *Canna* spp.

HABITAT

Terrestrial. Forests, regenerating forest, streamside and alluvial forest, forest light gaps and gullies. Prefers moderate to high fertility, not found in very dry or rocky areas.

GENUS

Hedychium

FAMILY

Zingiberaceae

AUTHORITY

Hedychium gardnerianum Ker Gawl.

FLOWERING

January, February, March

YEAR NATURALISED

1940

ORIGIN

India Himalayan region



Auckland. Photographer: John Barkla, Licence: CC BY.



Fruit. Wellsford. Photographer: Jeremy R. Rolfe, Date taken: 16/07/2006, Licence: CC BY.

REASON FOR INTRODUCTION

Ornamental

TOLERANCES

Tolerant of frost and moderate shade (Seedlings require semi-shade) and slightly tolerant of drought, requires medium to high soil fertility. Flourishes on damp silt. Physical damage results in multiplication of rhizome pieces.

LIFE CYCLE AND DISPERSAL

Perennial. The flower is hermaphrodite (Timmins & MacKenzie 1995). In addition to regenerating from seed, it reproduces vegetatively from short stout rhizomes. Up to 100 seeds are produced per flowerhead. Seed is dispersed by birds, in particular tuis and blackbirds (Landcare Research 4/93). Rhizome fragments and seed are also spread by humans and water and soil disturbance.

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

HEDGAR

MORE INFORMATION

<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/hedychium-gardnerianum/>

PDF DATE

25 May 2026