

Hydrangea macrophylla

COMMON NAMES

hydrangea

BIOSTATUS

Exotic

CONSERVATION STATUS

Not applicable

CATEGORY

Vascular

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Trees & Shrubs - Dicotyledons

FLOWER COLOURS

Blue, Violet/Purple

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Deciduous rounded shrub to about 2 m tall with suckering habit. Leaves tend to be towards the end of the branches and are ovate and up to about 20 x 15 cm, margins coarsely serrate. Flower head either rounded or flat. Usually composed of sterile flowers (especially in cultivation) but can have fertile flowers in centre. Seed capsule to about 5 mm long.

SIMILAR TAXA

Hydrangea is very familiar to New Zealand gardeners, wild material can appear quite different with flat inflorescences containing sterile flowers.

HABITAT

Terrestrial. Persistent around old homesteads, near water and on forest margins.

GENUS

Hydrangea

FAMILY

Hydrangeaceae

AUTHORITY

Hydrangea macrophylla (Thunb.) Ser.

FLOWERING

November, December, January, February, March.

YEAR NATURALISED

1975

ORIGIN

Japan

REASON FOR INTRODUCTION

Ornamental.

TOLERANCES

Prefers damp shady areas.

LIFE CYCLE AND DISPERSAL

Reproduces by suckering, persisting from cultivation and seed. Viable seed can be produced. Dispersed by people and gravity.



Robinson Crusoe Island, Chile. Photographer: John Sawyer, Date taken: 01/05/2010, Licence: CC BY-NC.



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ETYMOLOGY

hydrangea: From the Greek hydor 'water' and ageion 'a vessel or vase', referring to the shape of the seed capsules.

macrophylla: Big leaf

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

HYDMAC

REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

Johnson, A. T. and Smith, H. A (1986). Plant Names Simplified: Their pronunciation, derivation and meaning. Landsman Bookshop Ltd: Buckenhill, UK.

MORE INFORMATION

<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/hydrangea-macrophylla/>

PDF DATE

25 May 2026