

Lolium perenne

COMMON NAMES

perennial rye grass

BIOSTATUS

Exotic

CONSERVATION STATUS

Not applicable

CATEGORY

Vascular

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Grasses

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Loosely tufted, dark green, hairless, perennial grass. **Leaves** soft, thin, 30–200 × 2–6 mm, regularly ribbed above, very glossy and smooth beneath, joined to stem with small collar. **Leaf-sheath** reddish-purplish at base; inner sheath smooth, pale green; emerging leaf folded. **Ligule** up to 2 mm long, membranous, light green. **Seedhead** distinctive, erect, thin, flattened, slightly zig-zagged; with seeds in small clusters arranged alternately.

SIMILAR TAXA

The seedhead is distinctive with flattened and slightly zig-zag form.

HABITAT

Terrestrial. Roadsides and tracks, pasture, river flats and banks, waste land and sand dunes, lowland to montane

GENUS

Lolium

FAMILY

Poaceae

AUTHORITY

Lolium perenne L.

ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

YEAR NATURALISED

1855

ORIGIN

Eur, temp Asia, N Afr

REASON FOR INTRODUCTION

Agricultural

TOLERANCES

Tolerates wet to dryish soils, high to moderate fertility, can re-sprout after damage and grazing, tolerates warm to cold temperatures.

LIFE CYCLE AND DISPERSAL

Perennial. Reproduces by seed.



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WETLAND PLANT INDICATOR STATUS RATING

FACU: Facultative Upland

Occasionally is a hydrophyte but usually occurs in uplands (non-wetlands).

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

LOLPER

MORE INFORMATION

<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/lolium-perenne/>

PDF DATE

25 May 2026