

Nardus stricta

COMMON NAMES

mat grass

BIOSTATUS

Exotic

CONSERVATION STATUS

Not applicable

CATEGORY

Vascular

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Grasses

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

A perennial tufted grass. **Leaf-blades** very rough, bristly, dark green to bluish green, 4–30 cm long × 0.5–1 mm in diameter, the outer blades spreading out horizontally. **Ligule** short, white, firm. **Auricle** absent.

Tillers packed on short rhizomes. **Leaf-sheaths** dull, rough and persistent. **Flower-heads** distinctive with 2 rows of spicules on one side of the panicle, forming a bristle.

SIMILAR TAXA

The bristle-like flowerheads are distinctive.

HABITAT

Acid and damp but not permanently wet soils, e.g. edges of tarns, ephemeral wetlands, subalpine bogs, roadside ditches, damp soil and depressions on semi-natural tussock or pastoral land (Kissling et al. 2004).

GENUS

Nardus

FAMILY

Poaceae

AUTHORITY

Nardus stricta Sp.

ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

YEAR NATURALISED

1935

ORIGIN

Eurasia

REASON FOR INTRODUCTION

Accidental

TOLERANCES

Apparently not limited by topography or temperature extremes. Doesn't seem to grow in areas with less than 500 mm average annual rainfall. Shade intolerant. In native range goes up to 3500 m a.s.l.

LIFE CYCLE AND DISPERSAL

Spreads by rhizome branching and fragmentation. Also seed, particularly when colonising bare ground (Kissling et al. 2004).



Nardus stricta. Photographer: John Barkla, Licence: CC BY.



In wetland. Photographer: Melissa Hutchison, Date taken: 12/11/2022, Licence: CC BY-NC.

WETLAND PLANT INDICATOR STATUS RATING

FAC: Facultative

Commonly occurs as either a hydrophyte or non-hydrophyte (non-wetlands).

ETYMOLOGY

stricta: From the Latin strictus 'upright, stiff'

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

NARSTR

REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

Kissling WD, Scnittler M, Seddon PJ, Dickinson KJM, Lord JM. 2004. Ecology and distribution of *Nardus stricta* L. (Poaceae) an alien invader into New Zealand. *New Zealand Natural Sciences* 29: 1–12. <https://doi.org/10.26021/496>.

MORE INFORMATION

<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/nardus-stricta/>

PDF DATE

25 May 2026