

Zantedeschia aethiopica

COMMON NAME

arum lily

FAMILY

Araceae

AUTHORITY

Zantedeschia aethiopica (L.) Spreng.

FLORA CATEGORY

Vascular – Exotic

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Herbs - Monocots

NVS CODE

ZANAET

BRIEF DESCRIPTION

Evergreen clump forming plant with large arrowhead shaped leaves (up to 45 cm long and 25 cm wide) and pure white funnel shaped flowers (up to 25 cm long) with a bright yellow narrow sausage shaped centre (actually the flowers, the white part is a modified leaf).

DISTRIBUTION

Scattered throughout northern North Island, less common in southern North Island and northern South Island.

HABITAT

Swampy areas, often under willows and damp pasture and waste land.

FEATURES

Robust, evergreen, erect, clump-forming, to 1.5 m high, in close-set tufts from a tuberous rootstock with white fleshy roots; new tubers arising from shoots on the rootstock. Leaves large, leathery; laminae sagittate or ovate-cordate, 15-45 × 10-25 cm, dark green, the very fine veins somewhat lighter green, shining, entire, tip apiculate, margins undulate; petiole 40-100 cm long, lighter green, spongy, white on inside, purplish on outside. Scape ± = leaves, green, stout. Spathe ivory-white, bright green at base on outside, to 25 cm long, funnel-shaped, narrowed towards tip with a recurved apiculus to 2 cm long. Spadix ± ½ spathe, bright yellow; basal female zone, with staminodia interspersed, c. ¼-½ length of spadix, contiguous with upper male zone; sterile terminal appendage 0. Berries green or yellow, to ± 1 cm diam.

SIMILAR TAXA

Unlike most other wetland plants, but two other large plants in the arum family are superficially similar. Taro (*Colocasia esculenta*) and elephant ear (*Alocasia brisbanensis*) also have large leaves but arum can be distinguished by the veins of the leaf being the same colour as the rest of the leaf and the spathe being white

FLOWERING

October to December

FLOWER COLOURS

White, Yellow

FRUITING

Summer to autumn



Zantedeschia aethiopica. Photographer: John Smith-Dodsworth



Zantedeschia aethiopica. Photographer: John Smith-Dodsworth

LIFE CYCLE

Perennial. Seeds dispersed by water movement, birds and other animals. Local clonal spread by rhizomes, with longer distance spread by water movement, deliberate planting and garden discards.

YEAR NATURALISED

1870

ORIGIN

South Africa

REASON FOR INTRODUCTION

Ornamental plant

CONTROL TECHNIQUES

Can be controlled manually, mechanically or herbicidally depending on situation.

TOLERANCES

Tolerates wet (drought-resistant once established), wind, salt, hot to cold, most soil types, mod shade.

POISONOUS PLANT

When ingested this species causes burning of the mouth and alimentary canal. It also causes stomach pains and vomiting.

ATTRIBUTION

Prepared by Paul Champion and Deborah Hofstra (NIWA). Features description taken from Croasdale et al. (1994).

REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

Croasdale, H., Flint E. A. and Racine, M. M. (1994). Flora of New Zealand Volume 3: Freshwater algae, chlorophyta, desmids with ecological comments on their habitats, *Staurodesmus* *Staurastrum* and the Filamentous desmids. Manaaki Whenua Press: Lincoln, New Zealand.

Weeds of Australia

(http://keyserver.lucidcentral.org/weeds/data/03030800-0b07-490a-8d04-0605030c0f01/media/Html/Zantedeschia_aethiopica.htm)

Johnson PN, Brooke PA (1989). Wetland plants in New Zealand. DSIR Field Guide, DSIR Publishing, Wellington. 319pp.

Popay et al (2010). An illustrated guide to common weeds of New Zealand, third edition. NZ Plant Protection Society Inc, 416pp.

MORE INFORMATION

<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/zantedeschia-aethiopica/>