

Zizania latifolia

COMMON NAME

Manchurian rice grass

FAMILY

Poaceae

AUTHORITY

Zizania latifolia (Griseb.) Stapf

FLORA CATEGORY

Vascular – Exotic

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Grasses

NVS CODE

ZIZLAT

CONSERVATION STATUS

Not applicable

BRIEF DESCRIPTION

Large growing marginal emergent grass with light (dull) green, coarse, long straight leaves growing in fans, and purplish - red/brown flowers.

DISTRIBUTION

Locally naturalised Northland, Auckland, Waikato and Wellington, abundant on the margins of Northern Wairoa River, Northland.

HABITAT

Lowland still and slow flowing water bodies (both fresh water or moderately saline).

WETLAND PLANT INDICATOR STATUS RATING

OBL: Obligate Wetland

Almost always is a hydrophyte, rarely in uplands (non-wetlands).

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Tall marginal perennial. **Tufts** coarse, 2–4 m tall. **Rhizomes** stout, spreading. **Leaves** light green, up to 1 m or more long and 1–2 cm wide, with a stout midrib, papery, harsh, dull greygreen, tapering to a point, rustling loudly in wind. **Ligule** a very dense fringe of hairs. **Inflorescence** purplish or reddish brown, 20–40 cm long, dense and soft to touch; lower part is spreading and male; upper part is more closed and with female flowers.

SIMILAR TAXA

Raupō (*Typha orientalis*). Raupō is usually shorter (1–3 m) than Manchurian wild rice, with bluish-green leaves with a characteristic twist in the leaf blade and a cylindrical brown flower spike.

FLOWERING

November, December

FLOWER COLOURS

Green, Violet/Purple

FRUITING

Autumn



Habitat of *Zizania latifolia*. Te Harakiki Swamp, Kapiti Coast. Jul 2007. Photographer: Robyn Smith, Licence: CC BY-NC.



Section of leaf blade, adaxial side. Jul 2007. Photographer: Robyn Smith, Licence: CC BY-NC.

LIFE CYCLE

Perennial. Plants are hermaphroditic with the female inflorescence borne above the male inflorescence. Large amounts of seed is produced which germinated quickly. Reproduces through seed or vegetatively through tailoring and rhizome extension. Rhizomes spread slowly outwards. Seeds and rhizome fragments spread via water, livestock, machinery, e.g. graders, dumping of green waste, eel nets, boats and trailers, clothing and possibly by birds.

YEAR NATURALISED

1906

ORIGIN

Eastern Asia

REASON FOR INTRODUCTION

Accidental, contamination of ballast

CONTROL TECHNIQUES

Notify Ministry for Primary Industries if found.

TOLERANCES

Tolerant of drought and frost; highly tolerant of poor drainage and intolerant of shade. Regrowth from underground rhizomes occurs after physical damage, fire and grazing.

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](#).

ATTRIBUTION

Factsheet prepared by Paul Champion and Deborah Hofstra (NIWA).

REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

Champion P. et al. 2020. Freshwater Invasive Species of New Zealand 2020. NIWA publication.

<https://docs.niwa.co.nz/library/public/FreInSpec.pdf>

Johnson PN, Brooke PA. 1989. Wetland plants in New Zealand. DSIR Field Guide, DSIR Publishing, Wellington, NZ. 319 p.

MORE INFORMATION

<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/zizania-latifolia/>