

Malva arborea

COMMON NAMES

tree mallow

SYNONYMS

Lavatera arborea; Malva dendromorpha M.F.Ray (1998)

FAMILY

Malvaceae

AUTHORITY

Malva arborea (L.) Webb & Berthel.

FLORA CATEGORY

Vascular – Exotic

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Herbs - Dicotyledons other than Composites

NVS CODE

MALARB

CONSERVATION STATUS

Not applicable

HABITAT

Terrestrial. Waste places, cultivated land, Coastal sites.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Stout biennial herb, usually with a single stem up to 2 m tall. Stems hairy when young, becoming hairless and woody at base when older. Leaves velvety to the touch, with 5-7 lobes, up to 20 cm across. Lilac to purple flowers arranged in clusters at end and along upper parts of the stem. 6-8 seeds per fruit.

SIMILAR TAXA

There are several other large Malva species that have naturalised in New Zealand.

FLOWERING

August, September, October, November, January, February, March, April, May.

FLOWER COLOURS

Violet/Purple

LIFE CYCLE

Spreads by seed, 6-8 seeds produced by each fruit. Dispersed by soil movement.

YEAR NATURALISED

1870

ORIGIN

W. and S. Europe, N. Africa

REASON FOR INTRODUCTION

Ornamental

TOLERANCES

Prefers high light, thrives in disturbed sites and can tolerate salt.



Malva dendromorpha. Photographer: John Barkla, Licence: CC BY.



Pauatahanui Inlet. Photographer: Jeremy R. Rolfe, Date taken: 10/06/2006, Licence: CC BY.

ETYMOLOGY

arborea: From the Latin arbor 'tree', meaning tree-like

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](#).

TAXONOMIC NOTES

Long known as *Lavatera arborea*, in 1998 this species was transferred to *Malva* by Ray (1998).

REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

Ray, M.F. 1998: New combinations in *Malva* (Malvaceae: Malveae). *Novon* 8: 288-295.

Hill, S.R. 2009: Notes on California Malvaceae including nomenclatural changes and additions to the flora. *Madroño* 5.

MORE INFORMATION

<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/malva-arborea/>

PDF DATE

17 September 2024