

Erica cinerea

COMMON NAMES

bell heather

BIOSTATUS

Exotic

CONSERVATION STATUS

Not applicable

CATEGORY

Vascular

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Trees & Shrubs - Dicotyledons

FLOWER COLOURS

Red/Pink, Violet/Purple

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Small shrub sometimes very low and mat forming. Lvs in whorls of three sometimes opposite, 3-6 mm long, revolute with contiguous margins concealing the lower surface, glabrous except sometimes ciliolate margin. Petioles very short. Fls in terminal racemes, sometimes appearing umbellate. Corolla c. 6 mm long, urceolate, purple, rose, pink or occasionally white, glabrous. Style sometimes sticks out a bit from the corolla. Capsule c. 1.5 mm long.

HABITAT

Low stature shrub and tussock communities

GENUS

Erica

FAMILY

Ericaceae

AUTHORITY

Erica cinerea L.

ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

FLOWERING

December, January, February

YEAR NATURALISED

1940

ORIGIN

W. Europe

REASON FOR INTRODUCTION

Ornamental

LIFE CYCLE AND DISPERSAL

People often grow cultivars of this plant and are the chief dispersers.

ETYMOLOGY

erica: From the Greek ereika 'heath' or 'heather'

cinerea: Ash-grey



Tawhai Falls Track, Ruapehu. Photographer: John Smith-Dodsworth, Licence: CC BY-NC.



Tawhai Falls Track, Ruapehu. Photographer: John Smith-Dodsworth, Licence: CC BY-NC.

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

ERICIN

MORE INFORMATION

<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/erica-cinerea/>

PDF DATE

25 May 2026