

Manchurian wild rice

Zizania latifolia

Notify Council

Manchurian wild rice is an unwanted organism and notifiable organism under the Biosecurity Act 1993: propagation, spread, display and sale are prohibited. Sightings in the Wellington region must be reported to Greater Wellington Regional Council. All other sightings must be reported to MPI's Exotic Pest and Disease Hotline on 0800 80 99 66.

What is council doing about this?

Manchurian wild rice is 1 of 9 National Interest Pest Response (NIPR) species that the Ministry for Primary Industries (MPI) has identified for either eradication or national control. MPI works closely with the regional councils and other organisations on these programmes.

What does it look like?

Manchurian wild rice is a giant grass that grows up to 4m high. It has harsh, dull green leaves that are 1-2cm wide and grow in fans. The purplish or red-brown flower heads are 40-60cm long and are produced from November to December. Manchurian wild rice is often confused with native raupo and flax, but raupo is slightly smaller, has bluish-green leaves and dies back in winter. Flax leaves are much smoother and shinier.

In New Zealand, Manchurian wild rice has been recorded from lagoons, river banks, tidal flats, roadside ditches, damp pasture and cropping land. It is a relatively hardy plant that can grow in both fresh and salt water.

Why is it a problem?

Manchurian wild rice forms dense stands in aquatic or semi-terrestrial situations. It is very invasive and quickly spreads on land that is not grazed. It is tolerant of drought, frost and poor drainage but does not tolerate shade. Regrowth from underground rhizomes occurs after physical damage, such as fire and grazing.

Spread is mainly by rhizome (underground stem) fragments on excavators and farm machinery. Eel nets, boats and trailers also spread rhizome fragments. To prevent the spread, all potentially contaminated items should be checked and all rhizome material removed before leaving the site.

Manchurian wild rice reproduces through seed and through its rhizomes (roots), which spread slowly outwards.



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Control Methods

Infestations are regularly sprayed with herbicides until no further regrowth occurs, which can take several years to achieve. 10 years free of regrowth are required before elimination is declared at a site.

Related Links

Ministry for Primary Industries <http://apps.mpi.govt.nz/applications/nzpests-view/Article/635/Manchurian-wild-rice>

New Zealand Plant Conservation Network http://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora_details.aspx?ID=2657

NZ Flora <http://www.nzflora.info/factsheet/Taxon/Zizania-latifolia.html>

Unwanted Organisms Register https://www1.maf.govt.nz/uor-cgi/uor.pl/show?species_id=26148

NIPR programme <https://www.mpi.govt.nz/biosecurity/long-term-biosecurity-management-programmes/national-interest-pest-responses-programme/>

NZ Freshwater Weed and Pest Visual Guide <https://www.thisisus.nz/assets/Resources/New-Zealand-freshwater-weed-and-pest-visual-guide.pdf>

Freshwater Invasive Species of NZ 2020 https://niwa.co.nz/sites/default/files/Freshwater%20invasive%20species%20of%20New%20Zealand%202020_1.pdf

Weedbusters <https://www.weedbusters.org.nz/what-are-weeds/weed-list/manchurian-rice-grass/>

Check Clean Dry <https://www.mpi.govt.nz/biosecurity/exotic-pests-and-diseases-in-new-zealand/active-biosecurity-responses-to-pests-and-diseases/exotic-freshwater-clams-corbicula/stop-clams-from-spreading/>

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Rules

Under Section 52 and 53 of the Biosecurity Act 1993 no person can sell, propagate, breed, distribute or otherwise spread any pest in a Pest Management Plan, or any unwanted organism. Not complying with Section 52 or 53 is an offence under the Act, and may result in penalties noted in Section 157(1).

The National Pest Plant Accord is designed to prevent the sale, distribution and propagation of a set list of pest plants (the Accord list) within New Zealand. If allowed to spread further, these pest plants could seriously damage the New Zealand economy and environment.