

Chilean rhubarb

(Gunnera tinctoria – giant rhubarb)

Is Chilean rhubarb on your property?

Chilean rhubarb is included in Horizons' Regional Pest Plant Management Strategy as a Zero-Density Plant. All infestations will be controlled to Zero-Density as and when they are found. Zero-Density means the control of the pest plant to the last individual. Pest plant species that are limited in distribution will fall under this objective. If you see any sites of this plant, please contact us on free phone 0508 800 800.



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Identification

A giant perennial clump-forming prickly herb with stout rhizomes. Large leaves up to 2.5 m across which die back in winter. Flowers are tiny, produced in large erect fleshy spikes up to 1 m long, from the base of leaf stalks. Native of Chile.

Weedy characteristics

Large leaves create dense shade, preventing other species from germinating or growing. A single plant can produce 250,000 viable seeds, which are spread by birds and water. Spreads rapidly, invading riverbanks, coastal and inland cliffs, forest margins, wetlands and other sensitive areas.

Methods of dispersal

Pieces of rhizome may be carried by water. Seeds are carried by birds, water and also machinery.

Impact on indigenous habitats

Can totally transform the area where it grows by displacing native seedlings in damp areas and shading out mature plants.

Typical habitats

Chilean rhubarb is traditionally planted in wetter areas of gardens. Wilding plants can appear at nearby river and stream banks, coastal and inland cliffs, forest margins, wetlands and other sensitive areas.

Control

1. Dig out the plant.
2. Apply a broadcast application of triclopyr 600 EC with organo-silicone spreader at gorse control rates, metsulfuron-methyl, or by using herbicide granules applied at the base of the plant.
3. Care needs to be taken to destroy any loose stem or root fragments as they will sprout.

Site management

An annual check in late spring will pick up new seedlings or any re-growth.

Species recovery

Chilean Rhubarb is a prolific seeder that will persist for a number of years due to a large and persistent seed-bank. Chilean Rhubarb rhizomes can also re-grow from insufficient chemical uptake.

For more information please contact us on freephone 0508 800 800.

