

Chilean rhubarb

Gunnera tinctoria

Description

A waterside plant with huge leaves.

Dies back in winter.

Leaves: Very large, up to 1 m across, with 5 – 7 lobes, ragged edges and rough surface.

Leaf stalks: Up to 1 m long and covered in irregular reddish spines.

Flowers: Small with short stems on a large spike up to 1 m.

Fruit: Tiny orange berries each with a single seed.

Origin

Native of South American Andes.

Introduced to New Zealand as a garden plant.

Where is it found?

Stream and lake margins and damp areas.

Often grown as dramatic waterside plant in parks and large gardens.

How does it spread?

Seed spread by birds eating the fruits.

Why is it a problem?

Chilean rhubarb forms dense colonies shading out all other plants. It can eventually dominate stream and lake margins.



flower spike

Status as a pest plant in the Bay of Plenty

Chilean rhubarb is a Containment Pest Plant in the Bay of Plenty Regional Pest Management Plan.

Rules require land occupiers to destroy any chilean rhubarb on their properties.

It is an offence under the Biosecurity Act to propagate, sell, distribute, release or spread chilean rhubarb in the Bay of Plenty.

Assistance may be available from Bay of Plenty Regional Council by way of approved programmes.

CAUTION: When using herbicide please READ THE LABEL thoroughly to ensure that all instructions and safety requirements are followed.

DISCLAIMER: Information in this fact sheet regarding herbicides does not necessarily appear on the labels of the products concerned. Bay of Plenty Regional Council does not accept liability for any damage that may arise from the use of herbicides at non-standard rates. Mention of product trade names implies neither endorsement of those products nor criticism of similar products not mentioned.

How do I get rid of it?

Manual

Small plants can be dug out, taking care to remove the larger roots. Dispose of carefully.

Spraying

Use in spring when leaves are young and soft.

Spray with triclopyr (e.g. Grazon or Agpro Triclopyl).

With knapsack or CDAX unit use 60ml per 10 L of water.

Note: Do not spray over water.

For more information contact a Bay of Plenty Regional Council Land Management Officer

