Agapanthus

Agapanthus praecox

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Family
Liliaceae (lily)

Also known as
Agapanthus orientalis

Where is it originally from?
South Africa

Photo: Carolyn Lewis

What does it look like?
Robust, clump-forming perennial with long, thick, white rhizomes. Leathery, arching leaves (20-70 x 2-6 cm) with watery sap grow from the base in clumps of up to 20. Umbrella-shaped clusters (7 x 5 cm) of many small, purplish-blue or white flowers are produced from December to February, followed by thin, papery, black seeds.

Are there any similar species?
Native rengarenga lily is similar in leaf form, but has paler leaves and white flowers.

Photo: Carolyn Lewis

Why is it weedy?
Prolific seeder, dispersing effectively and germinating densely. Long-lived, and tolerates hot or cold temperatures, wet or drought conditions, wind, salt, poor soils, moderate-shade, heavy damage, and sea immersion of rhizomes and seeds.

How does it spread?
Seeds blows short distances, fall down banks and are also carried in flowing water. Seed and root fragments are also spread in contaminated soil, dumped vegetation and deliberate planting. Commonly found in gardens, roadsides and banks.

What damage does it do?
Forms pure stands, excluding all other species and becoming the dominant species almost everywhere it grows. It causes massive biodiversity loss, especially of rare coastal herb, grass and shrub species.

Photo: Trevor James

Which habitats is it likely to invade?
Most coastal sites, banks, cliffs, gumland, consolidated sand, fernland, shrubland, and bush margins.

What can I do to get rid of it?
1. Physical removal - Dig out scattered plants. Dispose of plant material at a landfill or refuse transfer station.
2. Cut and paste - Cut the stem/trunk as close to the ground as possible and cover the entire stump with herbicide as soon as possible after cutting. Apply glyphosate gel (120g/L strength) or metsulfuron gel (10g/L strength) or picloram gel (43g/l strength) to the entire cut stem.
3. Foliar spray - Apply triclopyr herbicide (600g/L active ingredient) at a rate of 6ml/L plus 2.5ml/L organosilicone wetter, such as Pulse penetrant, to thoroughly wet all parts of plant. Note: Triclopyr is ‘grass friendly’ but overspray will kill other (desirable) broadleaf plants. Do not use over water bodies or wetlands and use only as directed on label.
CAUTION: When using any herbicide or pesticide, PLEASE READ THE LABEL THOROUGHLY to ensure that all instructions and directions for the purchase, use and storage of the product, are followed and adhered to.

What can I do to stop it coming back?
Plants often resprout and seed bank reinfests bared sites thickly, so follow up frequently until eradicated. At least 3-4 follow up treatments are needed. Begin eradication at top of banks and work down. Don’t replant until after 2-3 treatments.