Cape sundew

Drosera capensis

www.weedbusters.org.nz

Family
Droseraceae (sundew)

Where is it originally from?
South Africa

What does it look like?
Upright, tufted perennial herb with numerous, linear green leaves (<6.5 cm long) covered with tentacle-like red hairs and tipped with a sticky sap growing in a rosette straight from the base of the plant rosette. Leaves curl around captured insects. Dark pink flowers form spikes (<35 mm tall.

Are there any similar species?
Cape sundew is distinguished from New Zealand native sundews by its dark pink flowers on long flower spikes. Also, forked sundew (*Drosera binata*) has forked, strap-like leaves and white flowers, while *D. auriculata* and shield sundew (*D. peltata*) have their sticky trap leaves in rosettes and also along the flowering stems.

Why is it weedy?
Wide habitat range, with its insect prey providing a source of nutrients which allow it to colonise infertile habitats (nutrient-poor soils) usually resistant to weed invasion. It can then spread rapidly by seed.

How does it spread?
Seed spread, possibly assisted by birds. Likely to have been deliberately planted in some natural areas.

What damage does it do?
Grows well in a range of New Zealand wetlands, displacing small native plant species including native sundews.

Which habitats is it likely to invade?
Nutrient-poor wetlands. Tolerates a wide range of low-nutrient habitats, from dune lakes to alpine herb-fields.

What can I do to get rid of it?
Contact Department of Conservation if you find this plant growing in natural areas. No control methods found.

Photo J Boow

Photo: J Boow

Photo J Boow