Pyp grass

Ehrharta villosa

www.weedbusters.org.nz

Family
Poaceae (grass)

Also known as
Pipe grass

Where is it originally from?
South Africa

What does it look like?
Strongly rhizomatous perennial grass (<1.5 m tall) with erect, cane-like stems and short rolled leaves. Slender seedhead (10-20 cm long) has purplish seeds from Spring to Summer.

Why is it weedy?
Grows and matures rapidly, tolerates hot, dry to damp conditions and produces massive amounts of widely dispersed, moderately long-lived seed.

How does it spread?
Seeds and rhizomes, this species was intentionally planted in the past for dune stabilisation.

What damage does it do?
Outcompetes native groundcover species.

Which habitats is it likely to invade?
Short tussockland, herbfield, bare land and wetlands, mainly on coastline and sand dunes.

What can I do to get rid of it?
This pest plant is under an active national eradication programme, and any attempt to get rid of it could accidentally spread the pest. Any plants found that are suspected to be this species should be reported to Biosecurity New Zealand using the pests-and-diseases hotline on 0800 80 99 66. They will work with you to control the weed.

What can I do to stop it coming back?
Rhizomes resprout and seeds in soil can germinate, so follow up required 6-monthly until eliminated.

Photo: Trevor James

Photo: Trevor James

Photo: Trevor James