

CAPE TULIP

The threat: Cape tulip is poisonous to people and livestock.

Why is Cape tulip a pest?

Cape tulip (*Moraea flaccida* syn. *Homeria collina*) is extremely poisonous to both livestock and humans and establishment in agricultural areas would have serious economic impacts.

All parts of the plant are poisonous, especially fresh leaves. Livestock and human deaths have occurred in New Zealand and South Africa.

Control of Cape tulip can be extremely difficult. Seeds and corms may be spread on the feet of livestock and by machinery which has been working on infested sites. Corms can be dormant through a growing season and for up to eight years.

Cape tulip is one of the pests being eradicated under the National Interest Pest Response programme led and funded by MAF Biosecurity New Zealand in partnership with regional councils and the Department of Conservation. It is both a notifiable organism and an unwanted organism under the Biosecurity Act 1993 and is banned from sale, propagation and distribution.

Where is it found?

Cape tulip has been reported historically from over 500 sites throughout New Zealand, mostly in Canterbury. Most Cape tulip sites are in gardens or have escaped from gardens into surrounding areas. A few sites are the result of people dumping their garden waste instead of taking it for safe disposal.

What does Cape tulip look like?

Native to South Africa, Cape tulip is a perennial plant belonging to the iris family. New shoots are produced in winter before dying back to an underground corm in early summer. Plants grow to 90 cm tall, and have a single leaf and branched flower stalk.

The leaf is long and strap-like and arches from the stem and then lies almost flat on the ground. The upper side of the leaf is shiny green and curled downwards at the edges. The underside is bluish-green.

Flowers appear individually over a two to four week period. Each flower only lasts one or two days. Flowers are usually salmon-pink with a band of deeper colour near the base of the petals, sometimes with a yellow centre.

What should I do if I find Cape tulip?

You can help us get rid of Cape tulip. If you have seen it or suspect you have seen it, please contact MAF Biosecurity New Zealand on freephone 0800 80 99 66.



CAPE TULIP FLOWER

Photo courtesy of Walter Stahei



CAPE TULIP CORMS

Photo courtesy of Walter Stahei



CAPE TULIP

FOR MORE INFORMATION VISIT: WWW.BIOSECURITY.GOV.T.NZ

June 2009