

# MANCHURIAN WILD RICE

**The threat: Manchurian wild rice displaces native species and blocks drainage channels.**

## Why is Manchurian wild rice a pest?

Manchurian wild rice (*Zizania latifolia*), also known as Manchurian rice grass, is a pest plant which displaces native wetland species and invades drainage channels, preventing access and impeding water flow, increasing the likelihood of flooding.

It also invades pasture, where its abrasive leaves cause woody tongue and ill thrift in livestock. It can also crowd out native vegetation by displacing shorter species and enveloping taller species.

It is spread mainly by rhizome (underground stem) fragments on excavators and farm machinery used in contaminated areas. Eel nets, boats and trailers also spread rhizome fragments.

Manchurian wild rice is one of the pests that MAF Biosecurity New Zealand, in partnership with Regional Councils, is working to eradicate as part of a funded National Interest Pest Response. It is an unwanted organism under the Biosecurity Act 1993 and is banned from sale, propagation and spread.



MANCHURIAN WILD RICE

Photo courtesy of Paul Champion, NIWA

## Where is it found?

Manchurian wild rice is found widely in the Kaipara region of the North Island, including along both sides of the Northern Wairoa river, with scattered populations elsewhere in Northland. It is also found at Lakes Kareta and Karaka in Auckland, scattered sites throughout the Waikato, and at one small site at Waikanae near Wellington.

## What does Manchurian wild rice look like?

Manchurian wild rice is a dense giant perennial grass which grows up to four metres tall. Plants have a fan of long straight thin papery leaves (up to 2cm wide) emerging from a bulky deep rooting and far spreading rhizome system. Leaves are dull grey-green with a stout mid-rib tapering to a sharp point at the top. The leaves may bend over at the top, and make a loud rustling noise in the wind. Seed heads are usually purplish or red-brown.

Manchurian wild rice is often confused with raupo and flax. Raupo has shorter leaves which twist upwards, 2cm wide with no midriff, softish, much thicker and spongy, and dies back in winter. Flax is similar, but the leaves are much wider, smoother, thicker and shiny.

## What should I do if I find Manchurian wild rice?

You can help us get rid of Manchurian wild rice. If you have seen it or suspect you have seen it in Northland, Auckland, Waikato and Wellington contact the respective Regional Council.



MANCHURIAN WILD RICE SEED HEAD

Photo courtesy of Trevor James



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**FOR MORE INFORMATION VISIT: [WWW.BIOSECURITY.GOV.T.NZ](http://WWW.BIOSECURITY.GOV.T.NZ)**

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## Regional Council Contacts

Northland Regional Council 0800 002 004

Auckland Regional Council (09) 366 2000

0800 806 040

Environment Waikato (07) 859 0999

Greater Wellington Regional Council (04) 526 5325

Anywhere else, please contact MAF Biosecurity New Zealand on  
0800 80 99 66.



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