

Cape tulip

Moraea flaccida

Family

Iridaceae (iris)

Also known as

Homeria collina

Where is it originally from?

South Africa

What does it look like?

Small, herbaceous perennial (<90 cm tall) with 1-3 tough, strap-like, drooping leaves (30-90 cm long) growing from the base of a round corm (<25 mm diameter) that has a thick, fibrous, dark brown covering. From September to November, a zigzag-shaped flowering stem has 6-petalled, funnel-shaped, orange-scarlet to salmon-pink flowers (40 mm long x 50 mm diameter) with yellow at the base growing from each angle, followed by many light brown, triangular seeds (3 mm long) in narrow, cylindrical capsules (40-50 mm long x 5 mm).

Why is it weedy?

Produces a large amount of seed and corms that last a long time in the soil.

How does it spread?

Seeds and corms are spread by animals, water runoff and machinery.

What damage does it do?

All parts of plant are poisonous to humans and livestock. Forms dense infestations.

Which habitats is it likely to invade?

Farm pasture, open areas.

What can I do to get rid of it?

If you suspect that you have found Cape tulip, do not touch 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?

Corms remain viable for many years, so plant other species to discourage them from sprouting.



www.weedbusters.org.nz



Photo: Trevor James



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