

Cenchrus purpureus

COMMON NAME

elephant grass

SYNONYMS

Pennisetum purpureum Schumach.

FAMILY

Poaceae

AUTHORITY

Cenchrus purpureus (Schumach.) Morrone

FLORA CATEGORY

Vascular – Exotic

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Grasses

CONSERVATION STATUS

Not applicable

BRIEF DESCRIPTION

Very large perennial grass, with 20–30 mm wide leaf blades. Inflorescence a simple spike-like panicle, involucre bristles plumose.

HABITAT

Terrestrial.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Robust tufted perennial grass to 3 m or more. **Rhizome** 6 mm diameter. **Leaf-blade** up to 75 cm × 3 cm, flat with numerous fine appressed hairs. **Culm internodes** with fine hairs for some distance below inflorescence. **Panicle** 14 × 2 cm, cylindrical and spike-like.

LIFE CYCLE

Perennial. Reproduction mainly vegetative.

YEAR NATURALISED

1990

ORIGIN

Tropical Africa

REASON FOR INTRODUCTION

Ornamental

TOLERANCES

Tolerates a range of conditions (0–500 m), but killed by frost. Drought resistant.

ETYMOLOGY

cenchrus: From the Greek cenchros which means millet

NATIONAL PEST PLANT ACCORD SPECIES

This plant is listed in the 2020 National Pest Plant Accord. The National Pest Plant Accord (NPPA) is an agreement to prevent the sale and/or distribution of specified pest plants where either formal or casual horticultural trade is the most significant way of spreading the plant in New Zealand. For up to date information and an electronic copy of the 2020 Pest Plant Accord manual (including plant information and images) visit the [MPI website](#).

MORE INFORMATION

<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/cenchrus-purpureus/>

