

Hesperantha coccinea

SYNONYMS

Schizostylis coccinea Backh. & Harvey

FAMILY

Iridaceae

AUTHORITY

Hesperantha coccinea (Backh. & Harvey) Goldblatt & J.C.Manning

FLORA CATEGORY

Vascular – Exotic

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Herbs - Monocots

CONSERVATION STATUS

Not applicable

BRIEF DESCRIPTION

Stunning bright crimson, rose or white flowers produced in autumn, a leafy plant up to 90 cm tall, with fan-shaped flattened leaves (iris-like).

DISTRIBUTION

Local and scattered throughout both islands, but common in parts of Westland and irrigation channels in Canterbury.

HABITAT

Margins of flowing and still water bodies, drains.

WETLAND PLANT INDICATOR STATUS RATING

FACW: Facultative Wetland

Usually is a hydrophyte but occasionally found in uplands (non-wetlands).

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Tufted rhizomatous evergreen perennial. Stems 60-90 cm × ± 3 mm, stiff, erect. Leaves < stems, to 30 × 1 cm, stiff, erect, slightly fleshy; 4-5 basal, distichous; 3-4 shorter, cauline; upper bract-like. Spikes 10-15-flowered; spathe-valves 2, green, tinged purple, 2.5- (3) cm long, ± = tube. Flowers c. 5 cm long, ± 5 cm diam., bright crimson; tube very narrow throughout, brownish, ± = widely spreading, ovate, acute lobes. Styles-branches 3- (4), slender, subulate, red, ± 2 cm long. Capsule 1.5 × 1 cm, oblong. Seeds ± 1.5 mm long, angled, brown.

SIMILAR TAXA

No other member of the iris family has such bright red flowers, but could be confusing in its vegetative stage with montbretia (*Crocosmia x crocosmiiflora*), distinguished by the lack of underground corms.

FLOWERING

March to May

FLOWER COLOURS

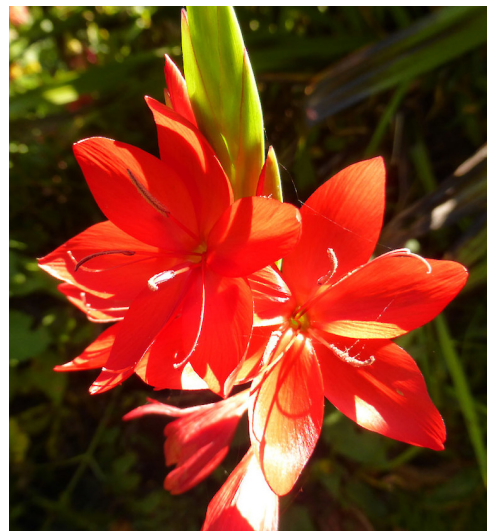
Red/Pink, White

FRUITING

Winter

LIFE CYCLE

Deliberate planting, with subsequent seed dispersal by water or contaminated machinery.



Cultivated in garden at Bushy Park, Kaiwi, Whanganui. Photographer: Colin C. Ogle, Date taken: 25/04/2017, Licence: CC BY-NC.



Te Awa Kairangi / Hutt River north of Stokes Valley, Lower Hutt. Photographer: Jeremy R. Rolfe, Date taken: 24/05/2020, Licence: CC BY.

YEAR NATURALISED

1958

ORIGIN

South Africa

REASON FOR INTRODUCTION

Ornamental plant

CONTROL TECHNIQUES

Not controlled in New Zealand.

ATTRIBUTION

Factsheet prepared by Paul Champion and Deborah Hofstra (NIWA). Features description from Healy and Edgar (1980).

REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

Healy, A.J.; Edgar, E. (1980). Flora of New Zealand, Volume III. Adventive Cyperaceous, Petalous and Spathaceous Monocotyledons. Government Printer, Wellington. 220pp.

Johnson PN, Brooke PA (1989). Wetland plants in New Zealand. DSIR Field Guide, DSIR Publishing, Wellington. 319pp.

Champion et al (2012). Freshwater Pests of New Zealand. NIWA publication.

<http://www.niwa.co.nz/freshwater-and-estuaries/management-tools/identification-guides-and-fact-sheets/freshwater-pest-species>

MORE INFORMATION

<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/hesperantha-coccinea/>