

**PEST
ALERT**

New Zealand Flax

Please Call 553-5236



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Photographs by Forest & Kim Starr (USGS)

What is it?

- New Zealand Flax (*Phormium tenax*) is a plant from New Zealand that is invading Hawaii.
- It has smooth, leathery sword-shaped leaves 3-10 feet long, and 2-5 inches wide.
- The leaves have a single orange-red midvein absent in similar-looking native species.
- The red flowers form in clusters along a long narrow stalk which emerges from the center of the leaf cluster.
- The roots are orange-yellow in color.

Why is it a problem in Hawaii?

- New Zealand flax grows into **dense clumps that crowd out native vegetation.**
- If left unchecked, large plants can even **block out sunlight** from native plants.
- **A single flower stalk can produce up to 10,000 seeds** which are winged and dispersed by wind.
- Plants also spread via sprouts along root-like rhizomes, expanding the thick clumps of New Zealand flax.

What is MoMISC doing?

- The Molokai/Maui Invasive Species Committee is a multi-sector partnership fighting to protect Molokai from invasive plants and animals that threaten our environment, economy, and quality of life.
- MoMISC prevents new invasive species from becoming established on Molokai through education and outreach.
- MoMISC works with the community to control invasive species on private and public property.

What can you do?

- Do not grow New Zealand flax.
- Learn to identify invasive species in the MoMISC brochure.
- Call MoMISC at 553-5236 if you see New Zealand flax anywhere on Molokai.
- Grow native plants instead of non-native plants. Encourage your friends to do the same.
- Before purchasing a plant, check if it is invasive. You can ask your nursery, call MoMISC for assistance, or check <http://www.state.hi.us/dlnr/dofaw/hortweeds/specieslist.htm>
- For more information, visit our website, <http://www.hear.org/AlienSpeciesInHawaii/>