

Rough horsetail

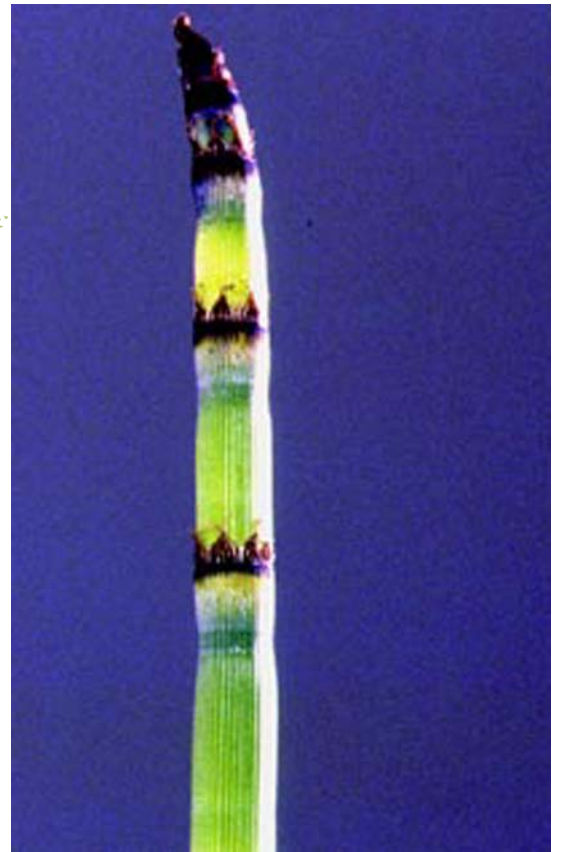
Equisetum hyemale

Family Equisetaceae



Identification

- **Ridged, hollow stems** that occasionally branch and feel **hard** and **rough**. The stems are **jointed** and break easily at this point
- **Leaves** are reduced to **toothed sheaths** that encircle the joints along the stems, with a black ring at the base
- Extensive **underground rhizomes** (underground stems)
- **Spores** produced in **cone-like** structures on fertile stems (rather than flowers and seed heads) - looks like a strange asparagus spear
- A **perennial** (plant living for more than 2 years) that grows up to **2 metres**



Rough horsetail stem tip. Photo: C. Woolmore



A dense mass of rough horsetail. Photo: J. Williams

Why is it a problem?

Rough horsetail spreads rapidly by underground rhizomes and it is extremely difficult to control once established. It can displace desirable plant species and is usually spread via the movement of soil containing rhizomes, or through deliberate planting.

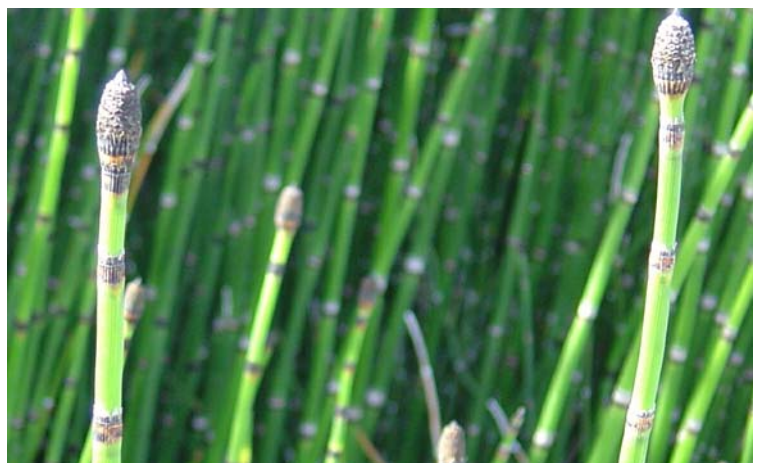
Where is it found?

Rough horsetail prefers moist areas such as gravel areas and pond/lake margins but once it is well established, it will adapt to a wide range of conditions. It can even be found growing through the cracks in concrete. It is sometimes kept as an ornamental plant due to its unusual appearance. Horsetail is also used in natural medicine.

Status

Rough horsetail is classed as an unwanted organism and is listed on the National Plant Pest Accord. This means that it cannot be sold, propagated or pieces given away within New Zealand.

Please report all sightings by calling the Potential Pest Line on (03) 363 9380 or email weeds@ecan.govt.nz



Cone-like structures contain spores. Photo: J. Williams