

Form: Call for expression of interest to prescribe certain organisms as 'not new'

for the purposes of the Hazardous Substances and New Organisms (HSNO) Act

Introduction

Fill this form if you or your organisation seeks to make a proposal to prescribe certain new organisms as 'not new' organisms.

Species are classed as new organisms under the Hazardous Substances and New Organisms (HSNO) Act if they were not present in New Zealand before 29 July 1998. As such, you require HSNO Act approval for propagation or distribution of the organism.

To change its 'new' organism status (which means that an organism will no longer be regulated as 'new' under the HSNO Act), an organism must be deregulated under section 140(1)(c) of the HSNO Act, by an Order in Council given by the Governor General prescribing organisms that are not new organisms for the purposes of this Act.

The Environmental Protection Authority will use the information in this form in the decision-making process (which is likely to include a public consultation component). Clearly label and include any confidential information as a separate appendix.

Proposing a candidate new organism does not guarantee the status of the organism will be changed. Organisms will be assessed on a case-by-case basis. We may advise you to apply using another pathway if there's an appropriate one available.

Submission details

Once you have completed this form, you may:

- send by post to: Environmental Protection Authority, Private Bag 63002, Wellington 6140
- or email to: submissions@epa.govt.nz

Submissions open on the 22 March and close on 4 June at 5.00 pm.

Privacy Act

We are collecting your personal information in your submission relating to prescribing an organism as 'not new', and will use the information you provide in this form to contact you in relation to your submission. We may also use your contact details for the purpose of requesting your participation in customer surveys. We will store your personal information securely. Your information may be made public unless you select the box below to request that we keep it confidential. You have the right to access the personal information we hold about you and to ask for it to be corrected if it is wrong. If you would like to access your personal information, or have it corrected, please contact us.

Please keep my personal information confidential.

Part 1

Name of person or organisation making the proposal: Ministry for Primary Industries

Postal address: Animal and Plant Health, MPI, PO Box 2526

Date: 6/05/2021

Part 2

Details of the new organism(s) proposed to be prescribed as 'not new' organism(s)

Please complete this section for each organism proposed to be prescribed as a not new organism.

1. Name of the organism

Philodendron squamiferum

2. Why do you want to prescribe this organism as 'not new'?

Including:

- a. Is there any information on the economic or environmental impacts of the organism?
- b. What is the benefit of making this organism 'not new'?
- c. Can these benefits be quantified?
- d. Can these benefits be achieved by alternative means?

P. squamiferum is proposed for de-regulation under the Hazardous Substances and New Organisms Act 1996 to allow the development of an Import Health Standard for this organism under the Biosecurity Act 1993 ("the Act"). This will allow the legal importation of this organism to New Zealand, and the effective management of the biosecurity risks associated with this organism when imported to New Zealand.

a. Is there any information on the economic or environmental impacts of the organism?

P. squamiferum, commonly called the hairy philodendron, is commercially produced for the ornamental plant trade. As a 'new organism' this species is not available for legal importation under the Act. However, despite its 'new organism' status, *P. squamiferum* and the hybrids Philodendron 'Florida' and 'Florida beauty' are available for sale and distribution within New Zealand by boutique retailers and private individuals.

Ornamental plants are recognised for their aesthetic, and mental-health benefits they afford their owners. Further, with the rise in apartment living, house plants are an important avenue to bring nature into the home. New Zealand has witnessed a sharp increase in the demand for house plants, especially those with rare and attractive qualities. When these

species, varieties and cultivars are not readily available for legal importation and subsequent distribution, wanting buyers to look to individual sellers to obtain new plants. This demand drives the illegal importation of plant material to New Zealand. Purchasers in New Zealand are often unaware of the biosecurity risks associated with illegally imported plant material. These risks are the pests and pathogens associated with the plant material in the country of origin.

The Philodendron species that are eligible for import and release into New Zealand have specific requirements to manage the following high-impact pests:

- *Phytophthora capsici*; and
- *P. palmivora*.

Phytophthora species are fungal-like organisms that cause root-rot, stem rot, leaf blight and dieback in hosts. In addition to these targeted measures, imported whole plants and cuttings require visual inspection, treatments to manage insects, mites and nematodes, and period of growth in Post-Entry Quarantine for disease symptom expression.

b. What is the benefit of making this organism not new?

The benefits associated with making *P. squamiferum* not new fall into two categories:

- Biosecurity risk management - Trade-in infected Plants for Planting is recognised as the keyway exotic pests and diseases are distributed internationally. Therefore, it is important the import of these commodities is appropriately managed. The deregulation of *P. pedatum* will allow for the development of an IHS and facilitate the legal and safe importation of this organism into New Zealand.
- Human wellbeing – As ornamental plants, *P. squamiferum* can contribute to the mental and physical well being of people. Ornamental plants are recognised for their ability to reduce stress levels, boost productivity and improve indoor air quality.

c. Can these benefits be quantified?

In general, the benefits associated with the de-regulation of these organisms cannot be economically quantified. With regard to biosecurity risk management, the benefits of deregulating these organisms cannot be quantified because it is unknown how these plants arrived in New Zealand, and what the country of origin for these plants are. With regard to human wellbeing, the nature and variation of these benefits make them difficult to quantify.

d. Can these benefits be achieved by alternative means?

These biosecurity benefits associated with deregulating these organisms cannot be achieved by another means. While these organisms are in demand among plant enthusiasts, the risks associated with the illegal importation of these will organisms remain. If the plants remain 'new organisms' the pathway to allow the safe importation of these organisms is not certain. This means that reputable plant producers will be unable to import and propagate these organisms safely.

3. Describe the biology of the organism

Including:

- a. What are the biological characteristics of the organism?
- b. Where is it found overseas?

- c. Does it cause a disease?
- d. Does it have potentially beneficial characteristics?
- e. What adverse effects could making this organism 'not new' have on people or the environment, if any? Can these be quantified?

P. squamiferum is native to Brazil North, French Guiana, Suriname.

Variable tropical species with a climbing habit, once past the stable juvenile form the adult form has variable leaf shape and size as it matures.

Stems robust covered in twisted chestnut coloured scales.

P. squamiferum has variable growth forms. The juvenile form has long elongated leaves. The adult form has parchment-like multi-lobed leaves, often with 5 distinct lobes. The upper leaf surface is glossy green, the lower surface semi-glossy grey-green. *P. squamiferum* produces flowers and fruits. The inflorescence is a spadix surrounded by a leaf-like spathe. The fruit is a collection of berries.

<https://www.exoticrainforest.com/Philodendron%20squamiferum%20pc.html>

<https://www.gbif.org/species/2870698>

<http://powo.science.kew.org/taxon/urn:lsid:ipni.org:names:88023-1>

4. Has the organism formed a self-sustaining population in New Zealand?

Including:

- a. Where and when has the population(s) of the organism been found in New Zealand?
- b. How does this organism spread?

Because of its use as an ornamental species and this being in its juvenile form, *P. squamiferum* is not known to have formed a self-sustaining population in New Zealand.

5. Is any person attempting to manage, control or eradicate the organism under any Act or is the organism the subject of an enforcement action or action under a civil penalty regime?

Including:

- a. If the organism has been part of an official incursion response or other MPI response or management activity, describe what happened here including why the response was stood down.

P. squamiferum and associated Philodendron hybrids 'Florida' and 'Florida beauty' were part of an incursion investigation by MPI in 2020. This investigation is now closed, no action or Call for expressions of interest to prescribe certain organisms as 'not new' Page 5 of 5 management activities were taken because no biosecurity risk was identified. Further investigations are unlikely.

- 6. Is there reason to believe that this organism was deliberately imported in contravention of an Act of Parliament? If so, please explain.**

The point of entry for the species into New Zealand is unknown.

- 7. Is there any other information you wish to include?**

Availability of *P. squamiferum* hybrid Philodendron Florida in New Zealand.

<https://johnnyjungle.co.nz/collections/plants/products/philodendron-florida>

Part 3

- 8. Provide references to the information you provided (if applicable)**