ID Guide

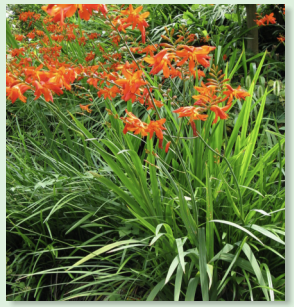
Montbretia

(*Crocosmia x crocosmliflora*)

Habitat: Terrestrial. Hedgerows, road verges, banks of lakes and rivers, beside woods and waste land, widely grown in gardens.
Family name: Iridaceae
Common name: Coppertips, Falling Stars

Rapid coverage in a single season

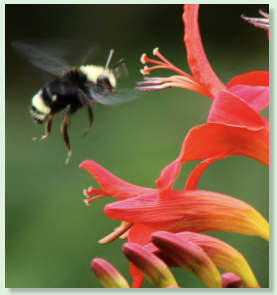
Description: Montbretia grows to 60 cm high with long spear-shaped leaves, 3cm wide, upright, flat and bright green. Leaves are shorter than the flowering stem arising from the plant base. The base is a corm, a swollen underground stem lasting one year. The flowers are up to 5 cm long and coloured deep orange.



Flower (resembles a hat)

Montbretia is considered an invasive alien pest and poses a risk to natural flora in the same way as Japanese knotweed or Himalayan balsam. It is a horticultural hybrid which was developed in France for ornamental purposes in the 1880s.

Montbretia grow from a corm that is able to survive the Irish winter producing fresh leaves in the spring. They flower from late July through to the end of



Orange Flowers

September, then die back for the winter, rusty brown dead leaves and remains of previous years flowering heads. The bright green sword-like leaves sprout vigorously in March.

Biodiversity of ecosystems can be significantly affected by an infestation of Montbretia. Once established, it out-competes the local flora and forms large dense stands.

Montbretia displaces native vegetation by smothering ground cover plants and small shrubs.

It inhibits the establishment of indigenous seedlings. Montbretia tolerates frost, heat, moderate shade and grazing so is capable of colonising a variety of habitats. It consumes fertiliser and water intended for crops.

Montbretia Leaves

Small fragments of roots can easily separate from the parent plant and become established in the wild.

Flowers form in two rows along each stem. The fruit are capsules that turn from green to brown and become shrivelled as they mature

Seed pods

Montbretia leaves

Reproduction: Montbretia's primary mode of spreading is vegetatively, through underground corms and rhizome fragments.

The corm is a bulb-like organ that provides the plant with energy. Each plant can produce up to 14 new corms annually.

These corms break off from the parent plant and begin to produce their own root network. This increases the size and density of an infestation.

Mature Corm

The corms, corm fragments and rhizomes can be spread unintentionally.

Complete eradication of Montbretia from a site may take a number of years. Non-chemical treatment, chemical treatment or a combination of both can be employed to remove the species.

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