Native dune plants

...can
- Reduce wind erosion.
- Build up sand dunes which reduce wave erosion.
- Speed recovery of dunes after storms.
- Grow in the hostile coastal environment.

...can’t
- Prevent direct wave erosion.
- Withstand excessive damage from people, stock or vehicles.
- Cope with mowing.
- Tolerate introduction of unsuitable exotic plants.

Pest plants in our dunes

In many coastal areas, introduced species have been planted to try to stabilise or beautify dunes.

Unfortunately these species aren’t as effective at dune protection as native plants, and they sometimes make erosion worse.

Many introduced species have become a problem as they dominate large areas and threaten native species.

Some of the problem species are agapanthus, exotic iceplant, prickly pear, daisies, acacia, boneseed, coastal banksia, freesias, kikuyu grass, and acacia, Norfolk Island hibiscus and sheoak.

Dune restoration

Dunes can be replanted to encourage natural processes, if there’s enough space between the beach and buildings or roads.

Replanting can also re-establish important native plants that have become critically rare in some areas – like spinifex and pingao – and restore the natural character and values of an area.

Keep in mind that some areas are naturally unstable and are valued environments just as they are. Before you commit to a project that’s trying to address dune stability, contact the Northland Regional Council for advice.

Northland CoastCare groups carry out dune restoration projects to protect and enhance native vegetation and replant it where necessary.

Help stop the spread of pest plants

Many pest plants are garden escapes – you can help by:
- Composting garden waste instead of dumping it onto the dunes
- Removing invasive introduced plants and replacing them with natives.

Contact the Northland Regional Council for removal techniques and suitable replacement plants.

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If you’re planning a replanting project, get in touch with the Northland Regional Council for advice and to find out what’s going on in your area.