



Alternanthera philoxeroides

Common Name(s):

alligator weed

Current Threat Status (2009):

Exotic

Distribution:

Locally abundant in parts of Northland and Auckland regions. Scattered distribution in Waikato, Bay of Plenty and single sites known from Horizons, Canterbury and West Coast.

Habitat:

Warm still and slow flowing water bodies, swamps, ponds, stream banks, dune hollows, flooded pasture and cropping land and urban lawns. It will tolerate a wide habitat range including brackish water, amongst pasture and terrestrial crops.

Features*:

An almost glabrous rhizomatous perennial herb, growing either as terrestrial or rooted emergent, or free flowing aquatic plant. Stems are 10-70cm long often forming large densely interwoven mats. Leaves are dark green, opposite, sessile, linear, 2 to 7 cm long, 5 to 40 mm wide. Flowers are silvery-white, 1.2 to 1.4 cm dia. borne on stalks 2 to 7 cm long rising from the leaf axis. Root is short and filamentous in water, rising mainly from nodes, longer & thicker in soil often extending below 50 cm.

Flowering:

Flowering is not known to occur in NZ. Midsummer till March in Australia (Parsons & Cuthbert, 2001)

Fruiting:

Seed set is unknown in New Zealand.

*Attribution:

Factsheet prepared by Paul Champion and Deborah Hofstra (NIWA).

References and further reading:

Champion et al (2012). Freshwater Pests of New Zealand. NIWA publication.

<http://www.niwa.co.nz/freshwater-and-estuaries/management-tools/identification-guides-and-factsheets/freshwater-pest-species>.

Johnson PN, Brooke PA (1989). Wetland plants in New Zealand. DSIR Field Guide, DSIR Publishing, Wellington. 319pp.

Coffey BT, Clayton JS (1988). New Zealand water plants: a guide to plants found in New Zealand freshwaters. Ruakura Agricultural Centre. 65pp.

Popay et al (2010). An illustrated guide to common weeds of New Zealand, third edition. NZ Plant Protection Society Inc, 416pp.

Timmins, S., McKenzie, I. (1995). Weeds in New Zealand Protected Natural Areas Database. (Department of Conservation technical series, 1172-6873 ; no. 8). Department of Conservation: Wellington.

Johnson, A. T., Smith, H. A. (1972). Plant Names Simplified: Their pronunciation, derivation and meaning. Landsman Bookshop Ltd: Buckenhill, UK.

For more information, visit:

http://nzpcn.org.nz/flora_details.asp?ID=2514



Caption: *Alternanthera philoxeroides*

Photographer: Bec Stanley



Caption: Roots

Photographer: Paul Champion