

# Ageratum houstonianum

## COMMON NAMES

Blue billy goat weed

## BIOSTATUS

Exotic

## CONSERVATION STATUS

Not applicable

## CATEGORY

Vascular

## STRUCTURAL CLASS

Herbs - Dicotyledonous composites

## FLOWER COLOURS

Blue

## DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Erect or ascending annual herb, up to 1 m tall somewhat woody toward base. leaves on a short petiole up to 20 mm long. Leaves hairy and glandular especially on lower surface, ovate with crenate-serrate margins up to about 50 x 60 m. Blue flowers in dense clusters. Seeds sparsely hairy, black up to 1.8 mm long.

## SIMILAR TAXA

Is distinctive within the Asteracea due to the blue flowers, and petiolate, hairy leaves with toothed margins.

## HABITAT

Terrestrial. Prefers open sunny spots along forest edges.

## GENUS

Ageratum

## FAMILY

Asteraceae

## AUTHORITY

*Ageratum houstonianum* Mill.

## ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

## FLOWERING

January, February, March, April, May, June, July, August, September, October, November, December

## YEAR NATURALISED

1888

## ORIGIN

Mexico, C. and tropical America

## REASON FOR INTRODUCTION

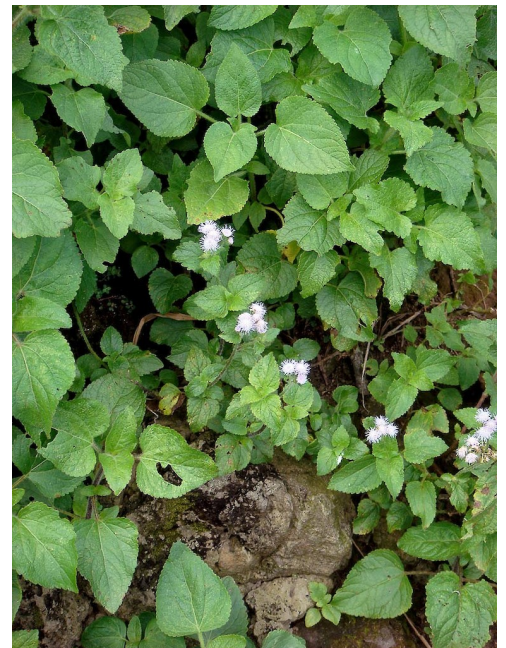
Ornamental

## LIFE CYCLE AND DISPERSAL

Annual. Produces small dry seed, sparsely hairy at one end. Dispersed by people and the wind.



*Ageratum houstonianum* in flower (wild plant), Dover Road, St Andrews, Hamilton. Photographer: Peter J de Lange, Date taken: 07/05/2006, Licence: CC BY-NC.



South Meyer Island, Kermadec Islands. May 2011. Photographer: Peter J de Lange, Licence: CC BY-NC.

## ETYMOLOGY

**ageratum:** From the Greek a- 'without' and geras 'old', meaning not aging, possibly referring to the fact that the flowers do not wither readily

**houstonianum:** Named after the genus Houstonia, which is named after the English botanist Dr William Houston.

## ENVIRONMENTAL WEED (2024)

**This plant is named in a list of 386 environmental weeds in New Zealand 2024 prepared by DOC.** 759 candidate species were considered for inclusion on this new comprehensive list of environmental weeds in New Zealand. The species considered were drawn from published lists of weed species, lists of plants that must be reported or managed by law if observed, existing national and regional programmes and agreements for pest management, and species already managed by the Department of Conservation (DOC). Candidate species were then assessed to see if they were fully naturalised and whether they have more than minor impacts in natural ecosystems. Read the full report [here](#).

## REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

Johnson, A. T. and Smith, H. A (1986). Plant Names Simplified: Their pronunciation, derivation and meaning. Landsman Bookshop Ltd: Buckenhill, UK.

## MORE INFORMATION

<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/ageratum-houstonianum/>

## PDF DATE

25 May 2026