

Allium triquetrum

COMMON NAMES

onion weed

BIOSTATUS

Exotic

CONSERVATION STATUS

Not applicable

CATEGORY

Vascular

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Herbs - Monocots

FLOWER COLOURS

Green, White

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Perennial herb to about 60 cm, strong garlic smell. Bulbs to 10-15 mm diameter, with offset bulbs. Leaves 2-5, linear, fleshy, keeled, 20-60 cm long, with white papery sheaths. The leaves usually die back in late spring. Flower stalk is three-sided, 20-60 cm high, fleshy and soft, sheathed by leaves at the base. Flowers are bell-shaped, 10-15 mm long, 5 petalled, white with green stripe on the petals, on drooping stalks. Seed capsules 7 mm diameter containing small black seeds.

SIMILAR TAXA

Can be separated from other species in the *Allium* genus by the sharply triangular stems. *Leucojum aestivum* and *Nothoscordum inodorum* are also similar but lack the garlic odour.

HABITAT

Disturbed forest and shrubland, streamsides, herbfields, bare land. Especially after spraying or other clearance to bare land.

GENUS

Allium

FAMILY

Alliaceae

AUTHORITY

Allium triquetrum L.

FLOWERING

October, November

YEAR NATURALISED

1899

ORIGIN

South West Europe, North Africa

REASON FOR INTRODUCTION

Agricultural

LIFE CYCLE AND DISPERSAL

Perennial. Tends to die back in late spring. Reproduces by seed and vegetative reproduction. Seeds are wind dispersed. Many seeds are produced. Bulbs can be dispersed by soil movement. Very shade tolerant.



Onion weed. Photographer: John Barkla, Licence: CC BY.



Flowers of onion weed. Photographer: John Barkla, Licence: CC BY.

WETLAND PLANT INDICATOR STATUS RATING

FAC: Facultative

Commonly occurs as either a hydrophyte or non-hydrophyte (non-wetlands).

ETYMOLOGY

allium: Possibly from the Latin word for garlic or the Celtic word all 'pungent' or 'burning'

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](#).

NVS CODE

ALLTRI

MORE INFORMATION

<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/allium-triquetrum/>

PDF DATE

27 May 2026