

Echium plantagineum

COMMON NAMES

Paterson's curse

BIOSTATUS

Exotic

CONSERVATION STATUS

Not applicable

CATEGORY

Vascular

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Herbs - Dicotyledons other than Composites

FLOWER COLOURS

Blue, Violet/Purple

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Hispid annual or biennial herb to c. 90 cm high. Basal leaves to c. 15 x 3.5 cm, linear-lanceolate to ovate-lanceolate; base attenuate and petiolate; apex obtuse; upper cauline leaves smaller, sessile, lanceolate to oblong, more or less cordate at base. Inflorescence with 1-several branches; branches becoming spike-like or panniculate. Calyx 9-12 mm long; lobes linear-lanceolate, much < corolla tube. Corolla 20-30 mm long, funnelform, reddish in bud, becoming purplish blue or blue; upper lobes > lower; 2 stamens long-exserted, others included; filaments deep pink; anthers blue. Nutlets 2-3 mm long, angular. (Webb et al 1988).

SIMILAR TAXA

Can be distinguished from *E. vulgare* by 2 stamens long-exserted, and the upper cauline leaves are more or less cordate at the base. *E. Vulgare* has 4 stamens long-exserted, and the upper cauline leaves are rounded at the base.

HABITAT

Terrestrial.

GENUS

Echium

FAMILY

Boraginaceae

AUTHORITY

Echium plantagineum L.

ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

FLOWERING

(September) December, January, February (May)

YEAR NATURALISED

1880

ORIGIN

Northern Mediterranean to South England



Roadside, SH3, Turakina. Dec 2011.
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Roadside, SH3, Turakina. Dec 2011.
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REASON FOR INTRODUCTION

Ornamental

TOLERANCES

Restricted to warmer areas.

LIFE CYCLE AND DISPERSAL

Annual or Biennial.

ETYMOLOGY

echium: Possibly named the Greek echis 'viper', named for the seeds' resemblance to a vipers' head. The plant was believed by the 1st century physician Dioscorides to be a remedy for a viper's bite.

MORE INFORMATION

<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/echium-plantagineum/>

PDF DATE

25 May 2026