

Euphorbia maculata

COMMON NAME

Spotted spurge; spotted sandmat (USA)

SYNONYMS

Chamaesyce maculata (L.) Small

FAMILY

Euphorbiaceae

AUTHORITY

Euphorbia maculata L.

FLORA CATEGORY

Vascular – Exotic

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Herbs - Dicotyledons other than Composites

CONSERVATION STATUS

Not assessed

BRIEF DESCRIPTION

Procumbent annual herb; dull grey-green, often with a purple central spot on each leaf; sparsely to densely hairy, especially on stems. Flowers minute, in small clusters in leaf axils.

DISTRIBUTION

In 1970s and 1980s was known mostly in north of the North Island of NZ + records from Nelson and Christchurch, but it has spread rapidly southwards in late 1990s and by 2010-15 has become a common, often abundant weed of road and path edge gravels, driveways, open dry gardens and waste areas. Seeds prolifically.

HABITAT

Dry open stone/gravel areas - often the first plant encountered at edge of tar-sealed roads.

FLOWER COLOURS

Green

YEAR NATURALISED

1969

ORIGIN

North America

ETYMOLOGY

euphorbia: After Euphorbus, a Greek physician who served King Juba of Numidia in 12BC. Juba named a cactus to honour Euphorbus and later Linnaeus named the entire genus after the physician.

maculata: From Latin 'macula' blotch, meaning blotchy

MORE INFORMATION

<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/euphorbia-maculata/>



Undersides of leaves. Wanganui. Photographer: Colin Ogle



Wanganui. Photographer: Colin Ogle