Euphorbia maculata

COMMON NAMES
spotted spurge; spotted sandmat (USA)

BIOSTATUS
Exotic

CONSERVATION STATUS
Not applicable

CATEGORY
Vascular

STRUCTURAL CLASS
Herbs - Dicotyledons other than Composites

SIMPLIFIED 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.

FLOWER COLOURS
Green

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.

GENUS
Euphorbia

FAMILY
Euphorbiaceae

AUTHORITY
Euphorbia maculata L.

SYNONYMS
Chamaesyce maculata (L.) Small

ENDEMIC GENUS
No

ENDEMIC FAMILY
No

YEAR NATURALISED
1969

ORIGIN
North America

Undersides of leaves. Wanganui. Photographer: Colin C. Ogle, Date taken: 03/03/2010, Licence: CC BY-NC.

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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/

PDF DATE

25 May 2026