Nasturtium microphyllum

COMMON NAME
one-rowed watercress

SYNONYMS
Rorippa microphylla (Boenn.) N. Hylander

FAMILY
Brassicaceae

AUTHORITY
Nasturtium microphyllum Boenn. ex Rchb.

FLORA CATEGORY
Vascular – Exotic

STRUCTURAL CLASS
Herbs - Dicotyledons other than Composites

NVS CODE
NASMIC

BRIEF DESCRIPTION
A bright green, robust, creeping or upright herb that has small white flowers in spring through summer, and is found along the margins of slow flowing shallow waters. Leaves have a distinctive peppery smell when crushed.

DISTRIBUTION
Common throughout New Zealand.

HABITAT
Margins of slow moving rivers, streams, ditches and drains.

FEATURES
Perennial stoloniferous herb. Stems trailing, glabrous, to several m long. Leaves glabrous, all similar, but becoming smaller near inflorescence. Pinnate, petiolate, 2-10-(25) x 1-5 cm; basal auricles very small; leaflets rounded, ovate; margins entire or sinuate. Pedicels glabrous, slender, erecto-patent, spreading to deflexed at fruiting, (8)-12-20-(30) mm long. Sepals 2.5-3.5 x 1 mm. Petals white, (4)-5-6 x 1.5-2.5 mm. Silique glabrous, narrow-oblong to linear, curved, (10)-15-25-(30) x c.1.5 mm; valves with distinct midrib, at least below; style c. 1 mm long. Seeds in ± 1 row per locule, brown, c. 1mm long, coarsely reticulate with 100-150 polygonal depressions per face.

SIMILAR TAXA
Very similar to N. officinale, but the flowers of N. microphyllum are larger, capsules are longer and more slender, and the seeds are in one row and with more finely pitted surfaces. The leaves of N. microphyllum turn brown/purple in autumn/winter.

FLOWERING
August - June

FLOWER COLOURS
White

FRUITING
Summer-autumn

LIFE CYCLE
Stem fragmentation and seed.

YEAR NATURALISED
1954
ORIGIN
Europe

REASON FOR INTRODUCTION
Culinary herb.

ETYMOLOGY
microphylum: Small leaf

ATTRIBUTION
Factsheet prepared by Paul Champion and Deborah Hofstra (NIWA). Features description from Webb et al. (1988).

REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

MORE INFORMATION