Poa annua

COMMON NAMES
annual poa

BIOSTATUS
Exotic

CONSERVATION STATUS
Not applicable

CATEGORY
Vascular

STRUCTURAL CLASS
Grasses

SIMPLIFIED DESCRIPTION
Roots, shallow, easily pulled from the soil. Stems, 2.5 to 30 cm tall, decumbent at base, sometimes rooting at lower joints (Wax, Fawcett and Isely 1981).

HABITAT
Prevalent in lawns and gardens, particularly those with moist, rich soils (Wax, Fawcett and Isely 1981). A weed of cultivated land and waste places.

GENUS
Poa

FAMILY
Poaceae

AUTHORITY
Poa annua L.

ENDEMIC GENUS
No

ENDEMIC FAMILY
No

YEAR NATURALISED
1844

ORIGIN
Europe

REASON FOR INTRODUCTION
Agricultural

LIFE CYCLE AND DISPERSAL
Annual. Grows well in cool weather but is not winter hardy (Wax, Fawcett and Isely 1981).

WETLAND PLANT INDICATOR STATUS RATING
FACU: Facultative Upland
Occasionally is a hydrophyte but usually occurs in uplands (non-wetlands).

ETYMOLOGY
poa: Meadow grass
annua: From the Latin annuus ‘year’, referring to a plant which completes its life cycle in a single year

Poa annua. Photographer: John Smith-Dodsworth, Licence: CC BY-NC.

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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

POAANN

REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

Wax LM, Fawcett RS, Isley D, eds. 1981. Weeds of the North Central States. University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign College of Agriculture, Illinois, USA. 303 p.

MORE INFORMATION

https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/poa-annua/

PDF DATE

27 May 2026