

Stellaria alsine

COMMON NAME

bog stitchwort

FAMILY

Caryophyllaceae

AUTHORITY

Stellaria alsine Grimm

FLORA CATEGORY

Vascular – Exotic

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Herbs - Dicotyledons other than Composites

NVS CODE

STEALS

CONSERVATION STATUS

Not applicable

BRIEF DESCRIPTION

Small herb with thin straggling stems, often scrambling through taller vegetation, leaves lance-shaped, usually up to 12 mm long and 5 mm wide in pairs along the stem, with small groups of flowers up to 6 mm across, the green sepals longer than the white divided petals.

DISTRIBUTION

Scattered throughout the North, South and Stewart Islands, with the exception of Northland and Auckland.

HABITAT

Wide range of wet habitats including water body margins, wet pasture, seepages and roadsides.

WETLAND PLANT INDICATOR STATUS RATING

FACW: Facultative Wetland

Usually is a hydrophyte but occasionally found in uplands (non-wetlands).

FEATURES

Perennial. Stems weak, ascending, 4-angled, glabrous, (8)-10-20-(50) cm long. Lvs green, sessile except on overwintering vegetative shoots, connate in pairs, lanceolate to oblanceolate to narrow-oblong, becoming linear-lanceolate above, tapering gradually to acute apex and glabrous or ciliate base, (5)-8-12-(25) × 2-5-(8) mm; margins usually closely undulate when dry; marginal vein ± distinct. Infl. axillary, cymose, lax, (1)-3-10-flowered. Bracts narrow-lanceolate, not keeled, scarious with green midrib, glabrous, 1.5-3 mm long. Pedicels slender, erecto-patent to patent, glabrous, 8-18 mm long. Sepals narrow-triangular, acute, 3-veined, (2)-2.5-3 mm long; margins scarious, glabrous. Petals < sepals. Stamens 10. Capsule narrow-ovoid, = sepals. Seeds red-brown, c. 0.5 mm long, with very short tubercles.

SIMILAR TAXA

Similar to stitchwort (*S. graminea*), but has shorter, relatively broader leaves, fewer flowered inflorescences and divided petals shorter than the sepals.

FLOWERING

September to May

FLOWER COLOURS

Green, White

FRUITING

November to May



LIFE CYCLE

Seed dispersed by water and contaminated machinery.

YEAR NATURALISED

1899

ORIGIN

Europe

REASON FOR INTRODUCTION

Unknown, seed or soil contaminant

CONTROL TECHNIQUES

Not controlled in New Zealand.

ETYMOLOGY

stellaria: Star flower

alsine: Like a chickweed, from the Greek *alsos* 'grove' often the habitat of chickweeds

ATTRIBUTION

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

REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

Webb, C.J.; Sykes, W.R.; Garnock-Jones, P.J. (1988). Flora of New Zealand Volume 4: Naturalised pteridophytes, gymnosperms, dicotyledons. Botany Division, DSIR, Christchurch.

Johnson PN, Brooke PA (1989). Wetland plants in New Zealand. DSIR Field Guide, DSIR Publishing, Wellington. 319pp.

MORE INFORMATION

<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/stellaria-alsine/>