

# Tradescantia fluminensis

## COMMON NAMES

wandering Jew

## BIOSTATUS

Exotic

## CONSERVATION STATUS

Not applicable

## CATEGORY

Vascular

## STRUCTURAL CLASS

Herbs - Monocots

## FLOWER COLOURS

White

## DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Trailing perennial with succulent stems, rooting readily at nodes. Forms a carpet up to 50cm thick. Alternate leaves 3-6 cm long, ovate-elliptic, shining and loosely clasping the stem. Leaves are typically dark green, but can have longitudinal stripes and/or purplish bases, these forms typically revert to green. The flowers are in clusters, are star-shaped and have 3 delicate white petals that are 10mm long. Seed not seen in NZ.

## SIMILAR TAXA

There are other species of *Tradescantia* in cultivation but none as widespread as *T. fluminensis*. *T. zebrinus* Bosse is green and white striped with deep purple undersides. *T. cerinthoides* Kunth is shortly creeping, and rather succulent. The stems are usually semi-erect. The stems are dark purple, the leaves are dark green often striped purple or completely purple. The leaves are very hairy on the undersides

## HABITAT

Terrestrial. A lowland plant of sites with moderate fertility. Can rapidly invade light gaps but prefers cool moist and shaded conditions. Thrives in forest, scrub and forest margins, cliffs, bluffs, and riverbed communities.

## GENUS

*Tradescantia*

## FAMILY

Commelinaceae

## AUTHORITY

*Tradescantia fluminensis* Velloso

## FLOWERING

December, January

## YEAR NATURALISED

1916

## ORIGIN

Brazil

## REASON FOR INTRODUCTION

Ornamental.



Keith George Scenic Reserve, Upper Hutt.  
Photographer: Jeremy R. Rolfe, Date taken:  
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Stokes Valley, Lower Hutt. Photographer:  
Jeremy R. Rolfe, Date taken: 13/12/2001,  
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## TOLERANCES

Very tolerant to shade. Experimentally shown to grow at irradiance levels 1-90% normal daylight over most of the year (Maule et al., 1995) and in poor drainage. Is intolerant to frost, but can quickly recover, or survive under trees etc where frosts are lighter. Resprouts from shoot fragments after physical damage and grazing (Timmins & MacKenzie 1995).

## LIFE CYCLE AND DISPERSAL

Perennial. No seed is produced in New Zealand. Fragments are dispersed by water, stock and humans (through dumping of garden rubbish, soil movement, pot plants and deliberate planting)

## PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

Vegetatively reproduces from adventitious roots on branching stems and fragmentation.

## WETLAND PLANT INDICATOR STATUS RATING

FACU: Facultative Upland

Occasionally is a hydrophyte but usually occurs in uplands (non-wetlands).

## ETYMOLOGY

**fluminensis:** From the Latin flumen 'river and -ensis 'origin', meaning growing near rivers

## NATIONAL PEST PLANT ACCORD SPECIES

**This plant is listed in the 2020 National Pest Plant Accord.** The National Pest Plant Accord (NPPA) is an agreement to prevent the sale and/or distribution of specified pest plants where either formal or casual horticultural trade is the most significant way of spreading the plant in New Zealand. For up to date information and an electronic copy of the 2020 Pest Plant Accord manual (including plant information and images) visit the [MPI website](#).

## 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

TRAFU

## MORE INFORMATION

<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/tradescantia-fluminensis/>

## PDF DATE

25 May 2026