Verbena litoralis

COMMON NAME
blue vervain

SYNONYMS
Verbena caracasana Kunth, Verbena affinis Mart. & Gal., Verbena longifolia Mart. & Gal., Verbena litoralis var. leptostachya Schauer
Verbena litoralis var. pycnostachya Schauer, Verbena litoralis var. glabrior Bentham, Verbena nudiflora Nutt. ex Turcz., Verbena paucifolia Turcz., Verbena integrifolia Sessé & Mocíño [nom. illeg.?], Verbena litoralis var. albiflora Moldenke, Verbena gentryi Moldenke, Verbena longifolia forma albiflora Moldenke, Verbena integrifolia Sessé & Mociño forma albiflora Moldenke, Verbena longifolia forma albiflora Moldenke, Verbena minutiflora Briq. ex Moldenke var. peruviana Moldenke, Verbena litoralis var. portoricensis Moldenke.

FAMILY
Verbenaceae

AUTHORITY
Verbena litoralis Kunth

FLORA CATEGORY
Vascular – Exotic

STRUCTURAL CLASS
Herbs - Dicotyledons other than Composites

NVS CODE
VERLIT

DISTRIBUTION
North Island: Far North to Auckland, Auckland, and Bay of Plenty, uncommon south to Palmerston North and Levin.
Introduced in West Indies, Africa, Indian Ocean Islands (Reunion, Mauritius), Pacific Islands, Australia.

FEATURES
Plants annual or short-lived perennial, taprooted or fibrous rooted. Stems erect, 50–100 cm, sparsely strigose to hirsute-strigose or hispid-hirsute, eglandular. Leaves persistent, lanceolate to elliptic-lanceolate or oblanceolate, midstem blades 2–5(–11) cm x 1–1.5 cm, veins not impressed adaxially, hirsute-strigose adaxially, glabrate to sparsely or moderately strigose-hirsute abaxially, eglandular, margins coarsely serrate on distal 1/2–2/3, not revolute; petioles absent or 1–5 mm. Spikes in 3s, forming obscure compound cymes, central pedunculate on peduncles 10–40 mm, inflorescence aspect loosely paniculiform, comprising well-separated spikes, central and laterals, 3–15 cm x 2–3 mm, fruits becoming remote on at least the proximal 1/4–1/2; floral bracts ovatelanceolate, 1–1.5 mm, shorter than the calyces, margins ciliate, adaxial surface glabrous to sparsely strigose. Calyces 1.8–2.2 mm, sparsely and loosely strigillose to hispidulous-strigose, eglandular, lobes connivent. Corollas white to blue, purplish, or pale violet, tubes 2–2.5(–3) mm, 0–0.5(–1) mm longer than the calyx, limbs 1.5–2 mm in diam. Nutlets 1.1–1.5 mm, commissural faces extending to very tip of nutlets, bullate, rarely bare. 2n = 28.
SIMILAR TAXA
Most similar to *V. officinalis* but separated by the leaves at most being deeply toothed, the inflorescence axis being eglandular and the flower spikes (1-)2-8(-10) cm long somewhat contracted.

FLOWER COLOURS
Blue, Red/Pink

YEAR NATURALISED
1911

ORIGIN
Native to northern and western South America (northwestern Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, Columbia, Ecuador, Peru, Venezuela), northward through Central America and Mexico (Aguascalientes, Distrito Federal, Hidalgo, Jalisco, Edo. Mexico, Michoacan, Nuevo León, Oaxaca, Sinaloa, Tabasco, Tamaulipas, Veracruz).

ATTRIBUTION
Fact sheet prepared by Marley Ford (5 March 2022). Brief description and Distribution sections are copied from Nesom (2010).

REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

MORE INFORMATION