

Lycopus europaeus

COMMON NAME

Gypsywort

FAMILY

Lamiaceae

AUTHORITY

Lycopus europaeus L.

FLORA CATEGORY

Vascular – Exotic

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Herbs - Dicotyledons other than Composites

NVS CODE

LYCEUR

CONSERVATION STATUS

Not applicable

BRIEF DESCRIPTION

Mint-like plant, up to 1 m tall, with square stems, toothed paired leaves and tiny white or pale mauve flowers produced in groups above each pair of leaves in the upper stem, but no minty smell when crushed.

DISTRIBUTION

Abundant in the Waikato and Rotorua Lakes, few sites in Northland, Auckland and in Westland near Haast.

HABITAT

Lake and river margins, drains and swamps, often growing at the base of raupo and tall sedges.

WETLAND PLANT INDICATOR STATUS RATING

OBL: Obligate Wetland

Almost always is a hydrophyte, rarely in uplands (non-wetlands).

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Perennial herb. Stem hairy, to c. 1 m tall. Lvs shortly petiolate or sessile. Lamina 3-8.5 × 1-3 cm, ovate-lanceolate to elliptic, deeply crenate-serrate, hairy at first, becoming glabrous or nearly so; basal area with narrow-oblong or linear-oblong lobes extending to midrib; apex ± acuminate. Upper lvs and bracts smaller, without basal lobes, hairy, especially on veins below. Calyx c. 3 mm long, hairy; teeth > tube, lanceolate-acuminate. Corolla 3.5-4 mm long, white with purple spots on lower lip and in throat. Nutlets 1.2-1.3 mm long, broad-obovoid, glandular and swollen on anterior face, with margin clearly delimited.

SIMILAR TAXA

Superficially similar to mints (*Mentha* spp.) but lacking the characteristic smell of those plants.

FLOWERING

Summer and autumn

FLOWER COLOURS

Purple, Red/Pink, White



Lycopus europaeus. Photographer: John Smith-Dodsworth, Licence: CC BY-NC.



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FRUITING

Summer and autumn

LIFE CYCLE

Seed dispersed by water, footwear or contaminated machinery.

YEAR NATURALISED

1940

ORIGIN

Europe, cold temperate Asia

REASON FOR INTRODUCTION

Possibly as a herbal plant

CONTROL TECHNIQUES

Rarely controlled, but can be controlled manually, mechanically or herbicidally depending on situation.

ATTRIBUTION

Factsheet 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.

Champion et al (2012). Freshwater Pests of New Zealand. NIWA publication.

<http://www.niwa.co.nz/freshwater-and-estuaries/management-tools/identification-guides-and-fact-sheets/freshwater-pest-species>

MORE INFORMATION

<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/lycopus-europaeus/>