

Echium plantagineum

COMMON NAMES

Paterson's curse

FAMILY

Boraginaceae

AUTHORITY

Echium plantagineum L.

FLORA CATEGORY

Vascular – Exotic

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Herbs - Dicotyledons other than Composites

CONSERVATION STATUS

Not applicable

HABITAT

Terrestrial.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Hispid annual or biennial herb to c. 90 cm high. Basal leaves to c. 15 x 3.5 cm, linear-lanceolate to ovate-lanceolate; base attenuate and petiolate; apex obtuse; upper cauline leaves smaller, sessile, lanceolate to oblong, more or less cordate at base. Inflorescence with 1-several branches; branches becoming spike-like or panniculate. Calyx 9-12 mm long; lobes linear-lanceolate, much < corolla tube. Corolla 20-30 mm long, funnellform, reddish in bud, becoming purplish blue or blue; upper lobes > lower; 2 stamens long-exserted, others included; filaments deep pink; anthers blue. Nutlets 2-3 mm long, angular. (Webb et al 1988).

SIMILAR TAXA

Can be distinguished from *E. vulgare* by 2 stamens long-exserted, and the upper cauline leaves are more or less cordate at the base. *E. Vulgare* has 4 stamens long-exserted, and the upper cauline leaves are rounded at the base.

FLOWERING

(September) December, January, February (May)

FLOWER COLOURS

Blue, Violet/Purple

LIFE CYCLE

Annual or Biennial.

YEAR NATURALISED

1880

ORIGIN

Northern Mediterranean to South England

REASON FOR INTRODUCTION

Ornamental

TOLERANCES

Restricted to warmer areas.



Roadside, SH3, Turakina. Dec 2011.

Photographer: Colin C. Ogle, Licence: CC BY-NC.



Roadside, SH3, Turakina. Dec 2011.

Photographer: Colin C. Ogle, Licence: CC BY-NC.

ETYMOLOGY

echium: Possibly named the Greek echis 'viper', named for the seeds' resemblance to a vipers' head. The plant was believed by the 1st century physician Dioscorides to be a remedy for a viper's bite.

MORE INFORMATION

<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/echium-plantagineum/>

PDF DATE

27 September 2024