

# Echium vulgare

## COMMON NAMES

viper's bugloss

## FAMILY

Boraginaceae

## AUTHORITY

*Echium vulgare* L.

## FLORA CATEGORY

Vascular – Exotic

## STRUCTURAL CLASS

Herbs - Dicotyledons other than Composites

## NVS CODE

ECHVUL

## CONSERVATION STATUS

Not applicable

## HABITAT

Terrestrial. Short tussock grassland, herbfield, bare land, riverbeds, usually in dry, low fertility inland areas.

## DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Densely bristly annual or biennial herb to 50-90 cm high. Deep taproot. Stems stiff, erect, covered in reddish bristly hairs, with many short branches. Basal rosette leaves to 15 x 5 cm, narrow, stiffly bristly, harsh to touch. Stem leaves much smaller, alternate, also rough. Flowers funnel-shaped, 5-petaled, 12-18 mm long, pink in bud, becoming vivid blue (rarely remaining pink or white), 4 long stamens protruding and 1 smaller inside flower; in tapering spike-like heads, Nov-Jan. Seeds 4-angled, egg-shaped, 2 mm long.

## SIMILAR TAXA

*E. plantagineum* Pattersons curse is less common (warmer areas only), has flowers 2-3 cm long, purplish-blue, with 2 protruding stamens, leaves less harsh. *Borago officinalis* borage occ escapes from cultivation, has star-like flowers 20-25 mm diam, in drooping clusters with cone of dark purple stamens; leaves with wavy margins, basal leaves up to 30 x 20 cm.

## FLOWERING

November, December, January

## FLOWER COLOURS

Blue, Red/Pink

## LIFE CYCLE

Annual or Biennial. Produces many, long-lived seeds that are dispersed by wind, water, river gravel.

## YEAR NATURALISED

1870

## ORIGIN

Eurasia

## REASON FOR INTRODUCTION

Ornamental



Mackenzie Basin. Photographer: Jane Gosden, Date taken: 05/01/2012, Licence: CC BY-NC-SA.



Flat Top Hill. Photographer: John Barkla, Licence: CC BY.

## TOLERANCES

Tolerates dry, wind, physical damage and poor soils.

## 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.

## 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](#).

## MORE INFORMATION

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

## PDF DATE

17 September 2024