Galega officinalis

COMMON NAMES
goat's rue

BIOSTATUS
Exotic

CONSERVATION STATUS
Not applicable

CATEGORY
Vascular

STRUCTURAL CLASS
Herbs - Dicotyledons other than Composites

FLOWER COLOURS
Violet/Purple, White

SIMILAR TAXA
The plant is a perennial growing to a metre high (Hilgendorf 1926). The plant is much branched and usually grows into dense clumps. The plant has pinnate leaves and lilac coloured flowers half an inch in length that are borne on spikes approximately 30 cm long. The seeds are hard, heavy, small and oval and are enclosed in pods similar to that of a pea.

HABITAT
The plant is able to tolerate severe frost. Invades flood prone land. The plant grows in pastures and on riverbanks.

GENUS
Galega

FAMILY
Fabaceae

AUTHORITY
Galega officinalis L.

ENDEMIC FAMILY
No

YEAR NATURALISED
1906

ORIGIN
Europe, Asia Minor, C. and S. Russia, W. Asia

REASON FOR INTRODUCTION
Accidental

TOLERANCES
When damaged, the plant has the ability to regrow.

LIFE CYCLE AND DISPERSAL
The seeds are able to retain their viability for more than a year under water. Abundant seed is produced - approximately 50 000 seeds per year. The seed is dispersed by gravel movement and water. The plant is dispersed by machinery and road metal transport (Ogle 1997). The plant is shed by explosion. The plant is spread by water movements and in river metal found in pastures and river beds.

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WETLAND PLANT INDICATOR STATUS RATING

UPL: Obligate Upland
Rarely is a hydrophyte, almost always in uplands (non-wetlands).

ETYMOLOGY

galega: From the Greek gala ‘milk’ and ago ‘to lead’, the plant being valued as a fodder for lactating cows and goats, hence the common name goat’s rue
officinalis: From the Latin officina shortened from opificina which originally meant ‘workshop’ but later came to mean a monastic storeroom, herb-room or pharmacy. Refers to the plant’s real or perceived medicinal value.

NVS CODE

GALOFF

MORE INFORMATION

https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/galega-officinalis/

PDF DATE

25 May 2026