

# Alisma lanceolatum

## COMMON NAME

water plantain

## FAMILY

Alismataceae

## AUTHORITY

*Alisma lanceolatum* With.

## FLORA CATEGORY

Vascular – Exotic

## STRUCTURAL CLASS

Herbs - Monocots

## NVS CODE

ALILAN

## CONSERVATION STATUS

Not applicable

## BRIEF DESCRIPTION

A marginal aquatic plant, with lance-shaped leaves, with many tiny pink flowers held on a pyramid-shaped inflorescence, much taller than the rest of the plant.

## DISTRIBUTION

Scattered in Hawke's Bay, Wellington and Canterbury.

## HABITAT

Margins of still and slow flowing water bodies and wetlands.

## WETLAND PLANT INDICATOR STATUS RATING

OBL: Obligate Wetland

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

## DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Leafy emergent perennial herb up to c. 1 m high, although non-flowering plants are much shorter. Aerial parts die off over winter to the rootstock. Leaves all basal, broad ovate 7-23 (28) × 2-5 cm, with a tapered base with a long petiole up to or exceeding the leaf blade. Petiole is semi-circular in cross-section (D-shaped). Submerged or floating leaved plants sometimes occur, these have narrower than emergent leaves. Inflorescence a large, much-branched panicle; branches whorled. Flowers usually pale lilac, c. 1 cm across. C. 20 rounded and flattened seeds (achenes) c. 2.5 mm long, in a dense circular head.

## SIMILAR TAXA

*Alisma plantago-aquatica* has broader lance-shaped leaves and lilac rather than pink coloured flowers. *Sagittaria platyphylla* has larger flowers on a smaller inflorescence and triangular petioles.

## FLOWERING

Summer

## FLOWER COLOURS

Red/Pink



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## FRUITING

Summer to autumn

## LIFE CYCLE

Spreads by waterfowl and water dispersed seed.

## YEAR NATURALISED

1895

## ORIGIN

Native to Europe, North Africa and West Asia.

## REASON FOR INTRODUCTION

Possibly ornamental pond plant, or a seed or soil contaminant.

## CONTROL TECHNIQUES

Rarely problematic and normally controlled in New Zealand.

## ATTRIBUTION

Prepared by Paul Champion and Deborah Hofstra (NIWA).

## REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

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Croasdale, H., Flint E. A. and Racine, M. M. (1994). Flora of New Zealand Volume 3: Freshwater algae, chlorophyta, desmids with ecological comments on their habitats, Staurodesmus Staurastrum and the Filamentous desmids.

Manaaki Whenua Press: Lincoln, New Zealand.

Johnson PN, Brooke PA (1989). Wetland plants in New Zealand. DSIR Field Guide, DSIR Publishing, Wellington. 319pp.

Preston, C.D.; Croft, J.M. (1997). Aquatic plants in Britain and Ireland. Harley Books, 365pp.

## MORE INFORMATION

<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/alisma-lanceolatum/>