Echium plantagineum

COMMON NAME
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. Carolla 20-30 mm long, funnelform, reddish in bud, becoming purplish blue or blue; upper lobes > lower; 2 stamens long-exserted, others included; filiaments 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

YEAR NATURALISED
1880

ORIGIN
Northern Mediterranean to South England

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 Dioscoridesbe to be a remedy for a viper's bite.

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Roadside, SH3, Turakina. Dec 2011. Photographer: Colin C. Ogle, Licence: CC BY-NC.

Reason For Introduction
Ornamental
Life Cycle Comments
Annual or Biennial.
Tolerances
restricted to warmer areas.