

Galium palustre subsp. palustre

COMMON NAME

marsh bedstraw

FAMILY

Rubiaceae

AUTHORITY

Galium palustre L. subsp. *palustre*

FLORA CATEGORY

Vascular – Exotic

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Herbs - Dicotyledons other than Composites

NVS CODE

GALPSP

CONSERVATION STATUS

Not applicable

BRIEF DESCRIPTION

Small herb with thin straggling stems, rough to the touch, often scrambling through taller vegetation, leaves in groups of 4 along the stem, with small groups of tiny (2-3 mm across) white flowers obvious during summer and autumn.

DISTRIBUTION

Throughout in lowland areas, commonest in north and west of both islands.

HABITAT

Swamps and wet grass and sedgeland near water bodies.

WETLAND PLANT INDICATOR STATUS RATING

OBL: Obligate Wetland

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

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Perennial; stems slender, weak and straggling, to c. 60 cm long, glabrous, or scabridulous on the acute angles. Lvs and stipules in whorls of 4-(6), subsessile or with short petiole to c. 1 mm long, 3-15 × 0.7-4.5 mm, linear, narrow-elliptic or oblanceolate, generally glabrous; margins flat, sometimes scabridulous; apex usually obtuse, sometimes subacute. Lvs of uppermost nodes often smaller. Cymes small, loose, glabrous or nearly so, often 2-5 from same axis, each with c. 3-7 fls, usually aggregated into panicles of up to 20 fls; peduncles very variable in length, to c. 2 cm long; pedicels up to 3 mm long, divaricating at fruiting; bracts leaflike at base of infl., either very reduced or 0 toward apex. Corolla 2-3-(3.5) mm diam., white; lobes ovate or ovate-oblong, acute or mucronulate. Mericarps 0.8-1.2 mm diam., globular, ± papillate.

SIMILAR TAXA

Galium debile is similar both in habitat and growth habit, differing by the denser flowering cymes, fruiting inflorescence branches not markedly divaricating and the usually narrower leaves.

FLOWERING

Summer to autumn

FLOWER COLOURS

White



Galium palustre. Photographer: John Smith-Dodsworth, Licence: CC BY-NC.



Galium palustre. Photographer: John Smith-Dodsworth, Licence: CC BY-NC.

FRUITING

Summer to autumn

LIFE CYCLE

Seed dispersed by animals, water or contaminated machinery.

YEAR NATURALISED

1904

ORIGIN

Europe and Asia Minor

REASON FOR INTRODUCTION

Unknown, possibly seed or soil contaminant

CONTROL TECHNIQUES

Not controlled in New Zealand.

ETYMOLOGY

galium: From the Greek galo 'milk', the leaves of *Galium verum* being used in the past to curdle milk

palustre: From the Latin palus 'swamp', meaning growing in swamps

ATTRIBUTION

Factsheet prepared by Paul Champion and Deborah Hofstra (NIWA). Features description from Webb et al., (1988).

REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

Webb, C.J.; Sykes, W.R.; Garnock-Jones, P.J. (1988). Flora of New Zealand Volume 4: Naturalised pteridophytes, gymnosperms, dicotyledons. Botany Division, DSIR, Christchurch.

Popay et al (2010). An illustrated guide to common weeds of New Zealand, third edition. NZ Plant Protection Society Inc, 416pp.

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

MORE INFORMATION

<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/galium-palustre-subsp-palustre/>