

# Galium trilobum

## COMMON NAME

native bedstraw

## SYNONYMS

*Galium tenuicaule* A.Cunn . nom. illegit. non Krocke (1823)

## FAMILY

Rubiaceae

## AUTHORITY

*Galium trilobum* Colenso

## FLORA CATEGORY

Vascular – Native

## ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes

## ENDEMIC GENUS

No

## ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

## STRUCTURAL CLASS

Herbs - Dicotyledons other than Composites

## NVS CODE

GALTRI

## CHROMOSOME NUMBER

2n = 44

## CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2017 | Not Threatened

## PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2012 | Not Threatened

2009 | Not Threatened

2004 | Not Threatened

## DISTRIBUTION

Endemic to New Zealand. North and South Island.

## HABITAT

Lowland to upland. In shady, damp and wet places, such as forest margins, scrub, stream and lake sides, moist pastures and tussockland, shrubland, rushland in seepage and near swamps.

## WETLAND PLANT INDICATOR STATUS RATING

FACU: Facultative Upland

Occasionally is a hydrophyte but usually occurs in uplands (non-wetlands).

## DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Perennial herb with straggling, slender stems, 10-70cm long. Leaf stems 0.5-3mm long. Leaves 2-10mm long, 0.8-3mm wide, narrower elliptic or spoon-shaped, in whorls of 4. Flower stalks up to 20mm long. Flowers white, starry, 2-3mm diameter, 3-4 clumped in leaf axils. Fruit small, round, dark brown.



Photographer: Cathy Jones, Licence: CC BY.



Photographer: Cathy Jones, Licence: CC BY.

## SIMILAR TAXA

*Galium propinquum*, *G. palustre*, *G. perpusillum*. *G. trilobum* has narrower, longer leaves and larger flowers on longer flower stems than *G. propinquum*. The introduced *G. palustre* has 5-30 flowers per head. *G. perpusillum* has narrower leaves, shorter stems and single flowers.

## FLOWERING

September to March

## FLOWER COLOURS

White

## FRUITING

November to May

## LIFE CYCLE

Mericarps are dispersed by attachment and possibly also wind (Thorsen et al., 2009).

## PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

Easily grown from cuttings and fresh seed but appears to be hard to maintain in cultivation.

## THREATS

Not Threatened but exact distribution unclear as it is frequently confused with the introduced *Galium palustre* and *G. debilis*. Herbarium evidence suggests it has declined from a large part of its northern North Island range but is still common in large parts of southern North Island, and along the eastern side of South Island. There is some evidence that two forms of *G. trilobum* exist, and this complicates conservation assessments. The one described here, matches the widespread form, and is commonly found in grey scrub communities and wetlands in the drier eastern part of the country. The other is now scarce, seemingly preferring raupo reedlands, and is a larger plant, with longer primarily sublinear leaves.

## ETYMOLOGY

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

**trilobum:** Three-lobed

## WHERE TO BUY

Not commercially available

## ATTRIBUTION

Fact sheet prepared by P.J. de Lange for NZPCN (1 June 2013)

## REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

Thorsen, M. J.; Dickinson, K. J. M.; Seddon, P. J. 2009. Seed dispersal systems in the New Zealand flora. *Perspectives in Plant Ecology, Evolution and Systematics* 11: 285-309

## NZPCN FACT SHEET CITATION

Please cite as: de Lange, P.J. (Year at time of access): *Galium trilobum* Fact Sheet (content continuously updated). New Zealand Plant Conservation Network. <https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/galium-trilobum/> (Date website was queried)

## MORE INFORMATION

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