

Stellaria graminea

COMMON NAME

stitchwort

FAMILY

Caryophyllaceae

AUTHORITY

Stellaria graminea L.

FLORA CATEGORY

Vascular – Exotic

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Herbs - Dicotyledons other than Composites

NVS CODE

STEGRM

CONSERVATION STATUS

Not applicable

BRIEF DESCRIPTION

Small herb with thin straggling stems, often scrambling through taller vegetation, leaves lance-shaped, usually up to 30 mm long and 5 mm wide in pairs along the stem, with many flowers produced in the upper parts of the plant, each up to 9 mm across, the white petals longer than the green sepals.

DISTRIBUTION

Scattered throughout the North, South and Chatham Islands.

HABITAT

Wetlands and margins of water bodies and wet grassland.

WETLAND PLANT INDICATOR STATUS RATING

FAC: Facultative

Commonly occurs as either a hydrophyte or non-hydrophyte (non-wetlands).

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Perennial. Stems weak, ascending, 4-angled, glabrous, 15-60-(100) cm long. Lvs green, sessile, connate in pairs, narrow-oblongate to narrow-lanceolate below, narrow-lanceolate or becoming linear-lanceolate above, tapering gradually to acute apex and sparsely ciliate or glabrous base, (10)-15-30-(50) × 3-5-(8) mm; margin flat; marginal vein obscure or 0. Infl. a terminal dichasium, lax, (10)-20-60-flowered. Bracts ovate-acuminate to subulate, keeled, 4-7 × 1-3 mm; margins scarious, ciliate. Pedicels slender, patent, glabrous, 10-30-(50) mm long. Sepals narrow-triangular, acute, 3-veined, 4-7 mm long; margins scarious, ciliate. Petals 4-9 mm long, c. = or slightly > sepals. Stamens 10 or fewer. Capsule narrow-ovoid, = or > calyx. Seeds dull brown, c. 1 mm long; papillae low, elongate.

SIMILAR TAXA

Similar to bog stitchwort (*S. alsine*), but has longer, relatively narrower leaves, many flowered inflorescences with larger white flowers.

FLOWERING

November to April



Flower showing divided petals, 3 styles, 10 stamens. Stokes Valley, Lower Hutt.
Photographer: Jeremy R. Rolfe, Date taken: 05/01/2007, Licence: CC BY.



Inflorescence. Stokes Valley, Lower Hutt.
Photographer: Jeremy R. Rolfe, Date taken: 05/01/2007, Licence: CC BY.

FLOWER COLOURS

White

FRUITING

November to April

LIFE CYCLE

Seed dispersed by water and contaminated machinery.

YEAR NATURALISED

1878

ORIGIN

Europe and western Asia

REASON FOR INTRODUCTION

Unknown, seed or soil contaminant

CONTROL TECHNIQUES

Not controlled in New Zealand.

ETYMOLOGY

stellaria: Star flower

graminea: Grassy

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.

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/stellaria-graminea/>