

Symphotrichum subulatum

COMMON NAME

bushy starwort, sea aster

SYNONYMS

Aster subulatus Michx.

FAMILY

Asteraceae

AUTHORITY

Symphotrichum subulatum (Michx.) G.L. Nesom

FLORA CATEGORY

Vascular – Exotic

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Herbs - Dicotyledonous composites

NVS CODE

ASTSBL

CONSERVATION STATUS

Not applicable

BRIEF DESCRIPTION

Tall, spindly, straight-stemmed almost hairless annual or short-lived perennial herb up to 2 m tall, with small pale purple flowers produced on a many-branched flower stalk

DISTRIBUTION

Common in the North Island, also established in northern South Island.

HABITAT

Wetland margins and coastal places, also in drier habitats including roadsides, wasteland and open grassland.

WETLAND PLANT INDICATOR STATUS RATING

FAC: Facultative

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

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Tap-rooted annual or short-lived perennial herb, glabrous or rarely with a few hairs on upper stem; stems erect, terete, sparingly branched below, 20-200 -(300) cm tall, rarely stems resprouting and somewhat woody after flowering. Mid cauline lvs lanceolate to linear, apetiolate and cuneate, acute, crenulate or remotely serrulate, 35-150 × 3-10-(20) mm; lowermost lvs mostly petiolate, elliptic, cuneate, obtuse; uppermost lvs linear. Infl. a many-headed diffuse panicle. Capitula 2-5 mm diam. Involucral bracts very unequal; inner bracts narrow-oblong to subulate, acute to slightly acuminate, green toward apex and along midrib, purplish at apex and margins, 5-8 mm long; outer bracts not wholly herbaceous, c. 2 mm long. Ray florets numerous; ligules white to pale purple, c. 1-2 mm long. Achenes subcylindric to ellipsoid, compressed, 4-5-ribbed, 1.5-2.2 mm long, with sparse antrorse hairs.

SIMILAR TAXA

No similar species.



Symphotrichum subulatum. Photographer: John Smith-Dodsworth, Licence: CC BY-NC.



Symphotrichum subulatum. Photographer: John Smith-Dodsworth, Licence: CC BY-NC.

FLOWERING

Year-round

FLOWER COLOURS

Violet/Purple, Yellow

FRUITING

Summer to winter

LIFE CYCLE

Wind dispersed seed.

YEAR NATURALISED

1896

ORIGIN

North America, possibly also Central and South America

REASON FOR INTRODUCTION

Unknown, seed or soil contaminant

CONTROL TECHNIQUES

Can be controlled manually, mechanically or herbicidally depending on situation.

ETYMOLOGY

subulatum: Awl-shaped

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/symphyotrichum-subulatum/>