

Verbena litoralis

COMMON NAME

blue vervain

SYNONYMS

Verbena caracasana Kunth, *Verbena affinis* Mart. & Gal., *Verbena longifolia* Mart. & Gal., *Verbena litoralis* var. *leptostachya* Schauer, *Verbena litoralis* var. *pycnostachya* Schauer, *Verbena litoralis* var. *glabrior* Bentham, *Verbena nudiflora* Nutt. ex Turcz., *Verbena paucifolia* Turcz., *Verbena integrifolia* Sessé & Mociño [nom. illeg.?], *Verbena litoralis* var. *albiflora* Moldenke, *Verbena gentryi* Moldenke, *Verbena longifolia* forma *albiflora* Moldenke, *Verbena integrifolia* Sessé & Mociño forma *albiflora* Moldenke, *Verbena longifolia* forma *albiflora* Moldenke, *Verbena minutiflora* Briq. ex Moldenke var. *peruviana* Moldenke, *Verbena litoralis* var. *portoricensis* Moldenke.

FAMILY

Verbenaceae

AUTHORITY

Verbena litoralis Kunth

FLORA CATEGORY

Vascular – Exotic

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Herbs - Dicotyledons other than Composites

NVS CODE

VERLIT

CONSERVATION STATUS

Not applicable

DISTRIBUTION

North Island: Far North to Auckland, Auckland, and Bay of Plenty, uncommon south to Palmerston North and Levin.

Introduced in West Indies, Africa, Indian Ocean Islands (Reunion, Mauritius), Pacific Islands, Australia.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Plants annual or short-lived perennial, taprooted or fibrous rooted. **Stems** erect, 50–100 cm, sparsely strigose to hirsute-strigose or hispid-hirsute, eglandular. **Leaves** persistent, lanceolate to elliptic-lanceolate or oblanceolate, midstem blades 2–5(–11) cm x 1–1.5 cm, veins not impressed adaxially, hirsute-strigose adaxially, glabrate to sparsely or moderately strigose-hirsute abaxially, eglandular, margins coarsely serrate on distal 1/2–2/3, not revolute; petioles absent or 1–5 mm. **Spikes** in 3s, forming obscure compound cymes, central pedunculate on peduncles 10–40 mm, inflorescence aspect loosely paniculiform, comprising well-separated spikes, central and laterals, 3–15 cm x 2–3 mm, fruits becoming remote on at least the proximal 1/4–1/2; floral bracts ovatelanceolate, 1–1.5 mm, shorter than the calyces, margins ciliate, adaxial surface glabrous to sparsely strigose. Calyces 1.8–2.2 mm, sparsely and loosely strigillose to hispidulous-strigose, eglandular, lobes connivent. **Corollas** white to blue, purplish, or pale violet, tubes 2–2.5(–3) mm, 0–0.5(–1) mm longer than the calyx, limbs 1.5–2 mm in diam. **Nutlets** 1.1–1.5 mm, commissural faces extending to very tip of nutlets, bullate, rarely bare. $2n = 28$.



Verbena litoralis. Photographer: John Smith-Dodsworth, Licence: CC BY-NC.



Verbena litoralis. Photographer: John Smith-Dodsworth, Licence: CC BY-NC.

SIMILAR TAXA

Most similar to *V. officinalis* but separated by the leaves at most being deeply toothed, the inflorescence axis being eglandular and the flower spikes (1-)2-8(-10) cm long somewhat contracted.

FLOWER COLOURS

Blue, Red/Pink

YEAR NATURALISED

1911

ORIGIN

Native to northern and western South America (northwestern Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, Columbia, Ecuador, Peru, Venezuela), northward through Central America and Mexico (Aguascalientes, Distrito Federal, Hidalgo, Jalisco, Edo. Mexico, Michoacan, Nuevo León, Oaxaca, Sinaloa, Tabasco, Tamaulipas, Veracruz).

ATTRIBUTION

Fact sheet prepared by Marley Ford (5 March 2022). Brief description and Distribution sections are copied from Nesom (2010).

REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

Nesom G.L. (2010). Taxonomic notes on *Verbena bonariensis* (Verbenaceae) and related species in the USA. *Phytoneuron* 12: 1–16.

MORE INFORMATION

<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/verbena-litoralis/>