

Spur valerian

Centranthus ruber



Identification

- Perennial up to 80 cm tall, with a woody base and tap root
- Leaves are green or blue/green
- Flower heads which are either deep pink, red or white, are made up of many small flowers
- In full flower from October to December but can flower until June



Spur valerian flowering Photo: G. Livingstone (Ecan)



Spur valerian invading a rocky outcrop Photo: D. Carter (CCC)

Where is it a problem?

Spur valerian is usually found in rocky coastal areas but can also be found growing inland. In Canterbury it is spreading along roadsides.

Why is it a problem?

Spur valerian produces lots of wind spread seeds and can quickly form dense stands shading out other plants. It is a serious threat to rare native plants which are found on rocky outcrops and cliffs around Banks Peninsula, on the Port Hills and also some inland areas.

Have you seen it?

Staff at Christchurch City Council are keen to stop spur valerian establishing along roadsides from Corsair/Cass Bay to Charteris Bay or elsewhere on Banks Peninsula. To report spur valerian to the council phone 03 941 7572 or email di.carter@ccc.govt.nz.

Control

It can be difficult to pull or dig out even small plants. Cutting and stump treating may be the best option—saw off the plant at the base and immediately treat the base with herbicide to prevent resprouting. Use all herbicides in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions and ensure no herbicide comes into contact with other plants, the soil or waterways.

What can you do?

If you have spur valerian in your garden consider removing it, particularly if you live in a coastal area or close to rocky outcrops.



Spur valerian Photo: Di. Carter (CCC)