

Shepherds purse, speedwell and spurrey

Shepherds purse (*Capsella bursa-pastoris*)

Summary

Common throughout NZ. Annual.

Identification

Its leaves are lobed but vary widely in shape even among plants growing together. It has a central stem (15-50 cm tall) carrying small white flowers and buds that are heart-shaped.

Characteristics

It is controlled in pasture by grazing and not letting it seed. The seed is viable for many years in the soil and plants appear in most crops/pasture sowings. It's tolerant of cold conditions and often grows through winter to set seed in spring.



Speedwell (scrambling) (*Veronica persica*)

Summary

Widespread - prefers loose fertile soils. Annual.

Identification

It has round hairy stems, some of which branch well and grow to over 50 cm long. Its flowers open quickly in sunshine and close quickly in shade. Seedlings are often confused with those of staggerweed but have soft round stems and fewer teeth on the leaves.

Characteristics

Germinates in spring and autumn. Is not eaten by stock.



Spurrey (*Spergula arvensis*)

Summary

Widespread annual.

Identification

Has very fine leaves and a sprawling stem. It produces small white flowers, which are gathered at the ends of the stems.

Characteristics

It mostly establishes in the autumn but can establish in spring. Even though it is a small weed it can cause problems by smothering newly sown pastures. Seeds remain viable in the soil for many years and outbreaks can occur following cultivation. Spurrey grows well under acidic soil conditions.

