

Alternanthera sessilis 'Red'

Verification of *Alternanthera sessilis* 'Red' species in cultivation within New Zealand

Botanical name: *Alternanthera sessilis*

Synonyms: *A. denticulata* R. Brown, *A. glabra*, *A. nodiflora* R. Brown, *Gomphrena sessilis* L., *Illecebrum sessile* L.

Common name: Rubra, *A. sessilis* var. *rubra*, *A. sessilis* 'Lilacina', Sessile Joyweed, *A. sessilis* 'Rosaefolia'

The plants of *Alternanthera sessilis* 'Red' were obtained from a wholesale distributor and aquatic plant nursery in New Plymouth, New Zealand. This document provided a written description and images of *Alternanthera sessilis* 'Red' to support positive identification of the plant.



Figure 1



Botanical description

Aquatic, wetland or terrestrial, prostrate or procumbent, perennial herbs. Stems usually much branched (Figure 1), forming mats, obtusely 4- angular (Figure 2), with root dusters at the lower nodes, green or often tinged with purple, glabrous, with 2-lines of hairs along the longitudinal grooves and transeverse line of white hairs across nodes, otherwise glabrous.

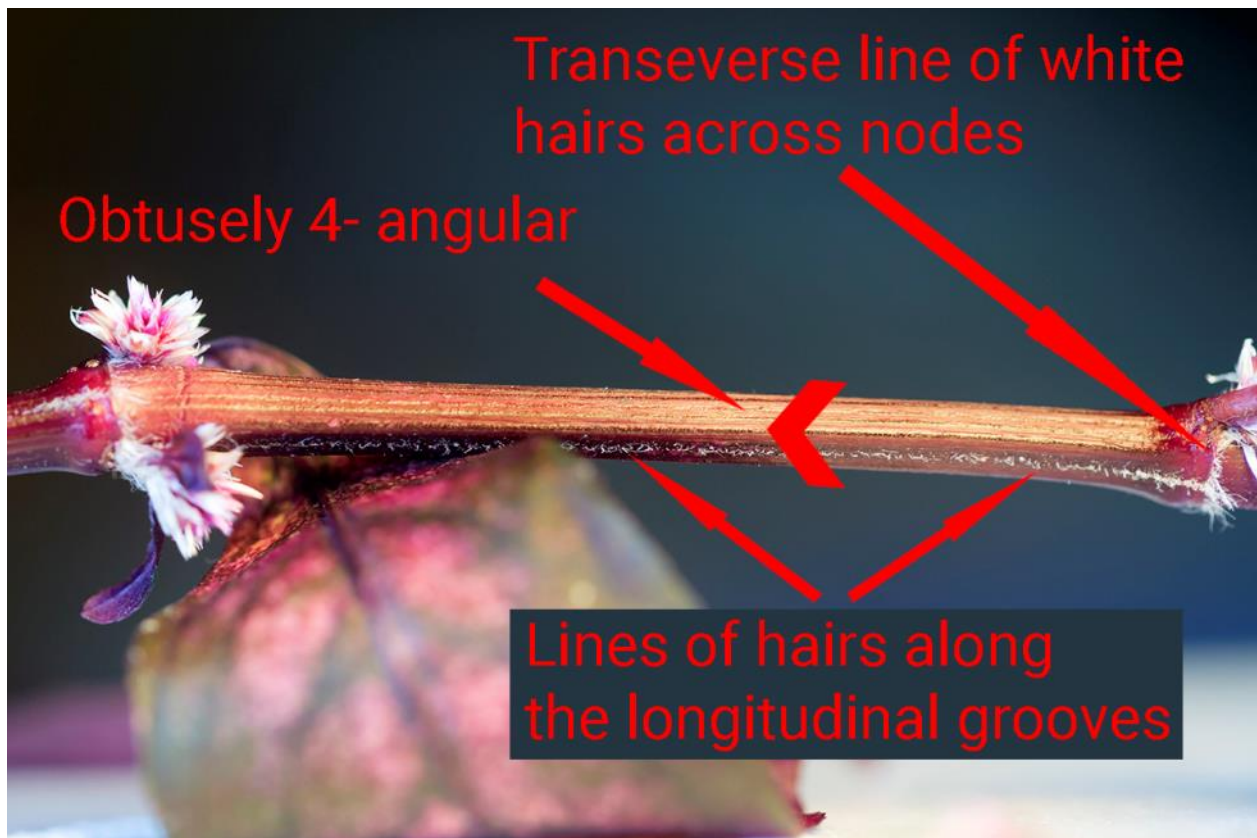


Figure 2

Note

Alternanthera sessilis is a horticultural species with many forms.

Botanical terms

- Procumbent: Trailing or spreading along the ground
- Prostrate: Lying flat on the ground
- Obtuse: Having a blunt or rounded tip
- Glabrous: Without hairs



Leaves equal, in pairs, sessile, variable in shape and size; blades lanceolate to spatulate or oval, entire or obscurely denticulate, 1.0-7.0 x 0.3-2.9 cm, rounded to acute at the tips, acute to cuneate at the base; petiole obsolete to 5 mm long, green with purple margin, glabrous or thinly pilose (Figure 3).

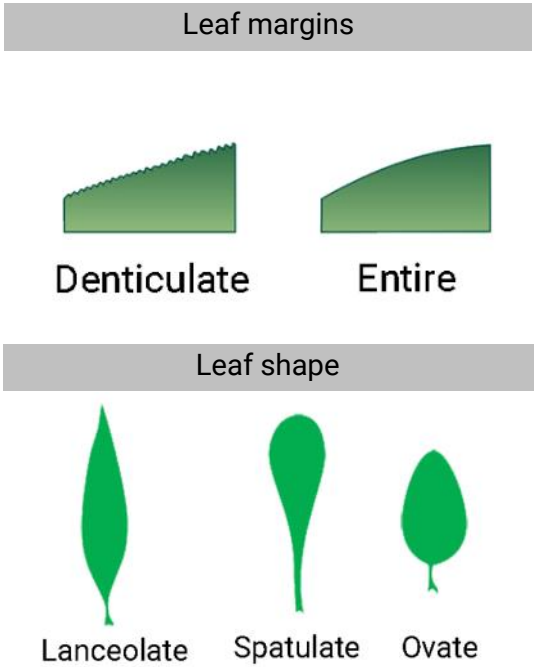


Figure 3

Inflorescence paired or in clusters up to 5 (Figure 4), white, globose, sessile (Figure 5), pink at the apex, 4.0-7.0 mm in diameter, becoming cylindrical at fruiting stage. Flowers 2.5-3.0 mm long, white.



Figure 4



Figure 5



Bracts deltoid-ovate, 0.8-1.1 mm long, acuminate, white, persistent, glabrous. Bracteoles deltoid-ovate, 1.0-1.5 mm long, mucronate with excurrent midrib, persistent (Figure 6). Tepals 5, subequal, oval-elliptical. 1.5-2.5 mm long, apex acute, white or purple tinged, glabrous, 1-nerved, Stamens 5, 3 fertile, alternating with 2 filamentous pseudostaminodes; filaments 0.5-0.8 mm long; anthers minute, ovoid-oblong, ca 0.3 mm long. Pseudostamens 0.5-0.6 mm long, entire or irregularly lobed. Ovary ca 2.0 mm long, obovoid, compressed; style short; stigma capitate.(Figure 7).

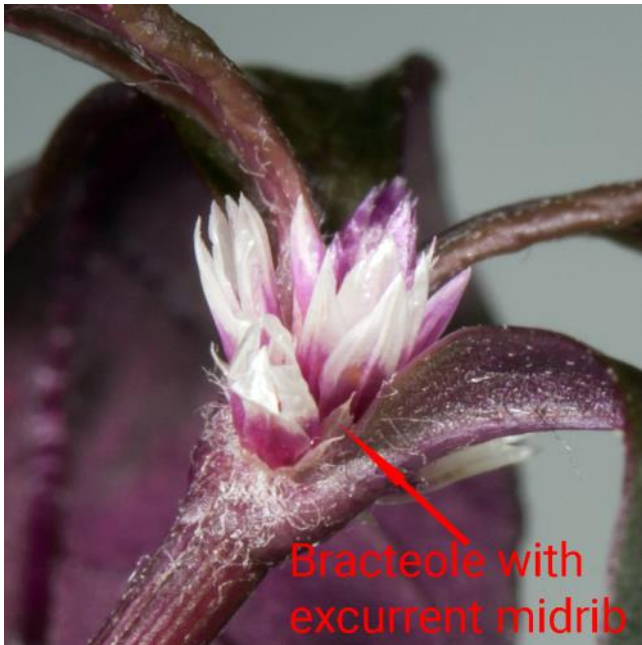


Figure 6



Figure 7 Flower; bract and bracteoles removed

Botanical terms

- Acuminate: Tapering gradually to a point
- Bracteole: Small type of bract on an inflorescence, but smaller than any normal bracts on the same inflorescence and nearer to the individual
- Mucro: A sharp, short point, generally at the tip of a leaf or the tip of the midrib of a compound leaf
- Staminode: A sterile stamen, often rudimentary; sometimes modified to perform some other function, e.g. that of a petal or nectary



Utricle obcordate, 1.2-2.5 mm- long, 2.0 mm wide, exarginate at the apex, dark brown. Seeds discoid, 0.5-1.0 mm in diameter, shining, brown.



Figure 8



Figure 9 Old flower with fruits

Flowering & Fruiting : Most part of the year.

Distribution : A native of Brazil. World : Widespread in the tropics and subtropics of both old and New World; India : Throughout hotter parts of India.

Ecology : Common in wetlands, at the edges of water-bodies, rivers, canals, fallow lands and in paddy fields.

Bibliography

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Federal Noxious Weed Disseminules of the United States <http://idtools.org/id/fnw/factsheet.php?name=14580>

