Stonecrop

Sedum acre

www.weedbusters.org.nz

Family
Crassulaceae (stonecrop)

Also known as
Biting stonecrop

Where is it originally from?
Europe

Photo: Trevor James

What does it look like?
Low-growing, succulent, evergreen, mat-forming herb (<10cm high) with fibrous roots and fleshy, round, creeping stems that take root at nodes and many short erect sterile and flowering stems. Ovalish, yellowish, hairless leaves (5 x 3 mm) are very fleshy and acrid to taste. Bright yellow star-like flowers (12 mm diameter, Nov-Mar) have five sharp petals and are followed by many seeds in dry, splitting follicles.

Are there any similar species?
White stonecrop (*S. album*) has larger leaves, flattened on upper surface, white flowers but doesn?t have acrid taste or large number of seeds. Shrubby stonecrop (*H. praealtum*) is 50 cm high with yellow flowers in large pyramidal panicles. *S. decumbens*, *S. forsterianum*, *S. reflexum*, *S. spectabile*, *S. spurium* are all cultivated and occasionally spread, especially on coastlines.

Photo: Trevor James

Why is it weedy?
Succulent leaf and stem fragments root, giving it a creeping habit. Quick maturing; produces very many, relatively long-lived and well-dispersed seeds. Tolerates wind, salt, very hot to hard frost, drought, poorest soils. Intolerant of poor drainage, wet sites.

How does it spread?
Seed, stem and leaf fragments spread by soil and occasionally water, road graders, traffic and gravity (cliff areas) and also by deliberate movement and plantings. Sources include waste places, rail tracks, walls and banks, roadsides, river and coastal shingle.

Photo: Trevor James

What damage does it do?
Forms dense mats, excluding almost all other species. Threatens rare native low-growing coastal and shingle species.

Which habitats is it likely to invade?
Tall and short tussockland, bare land, riverbeds, coastal cliffs, behind beaches, sandy, rocky, stony, gravelly areas from sea level to 1500 m.

What can I do to get rid of it?
1. Physical removal - Hand pull or dig out entire plant - Ensure all plant material is removed from site to prevent regrowth, dispose of all plant material at a refuse transfer centre or burn it
3. Foliar spray - Apply herbicide using a knapsack sprayer. Apply metsulfuron-methyl 600g/kg (0.5g/L) + glyphosate 360g/L (20ml/L) + organosilicone penetrant (2ml/L).
*Note: Overspray will kill other (desirable) plants. Avoid spraying metsulfuron around the root zone of desirable plants.
CAUTION: When using any herbicide or pesticide, PLEASE READ THE LABEL THOROUGHLY to ensure that all instructions and directions for the purchase, use and storage of the product, are followed and adhered to.

What can I do to stop it coming back?
Frequent follow up control necessary to cover fragment regrowth. Begin at top of cliff, bank, etc. Do not replant for 2 months after spraying. May need to eradicate from nearby gardens. Popular garden plant, publicity may be required.