Onion weed

Allium triquetrum

www.weedbusters.org.nz

Family
Liliaceae (lily)

Also known as
Three-cornered garlic

Where is it originally from?
Mediterranean

Photo: Trevor James

What does it look like?
Grass-like perennial (<60 cm) with a strong garlic smell, growing from main bulbs (<10-15 mm diameter) and producing offset bulbs. Fleshy, straight leaves (2-5, each 20-60 cm long), with white papery sheaths, usually die back in late Spring. Fleshy, soft, 3-sided flower stalk (20-60 cm high) is surrounded by leaves at the base, and supports bell-shaped flowers (10-15 mm long, Oct-Nov) that are 5-petalled and are white with green stripes on each petal. Seed capsules (7 mm diameter) contain black seeds.

Are there any similar species?
Wild onion (*A. vineale*) has rush-like stems. Snowflake (*Leucojum aestivum*) and *Nothoscordum inodorum* lack garlic odour.

Photo: Trevor James

Why is it weedy?
Seeds and offset bulbs ensure distribution. Tolerates hot and cold, wind, semi-shade, damp heavy soils. Intolerant of strong competition for space, heavy shade.

How does it spread?
Seed and bulbs are spread via water and soil movement, dumped vegetation, contaminated machinery and nursery plants. Sources include wasteland, roadsides, sprayed areas, hedgerows, gardens.

What damage does it do?
Forms dense mats in Winter/Spring in disturbed sites, discourages native species from establishing.

Which habitats is it likely to invade?
Disturbed forest and shrubland, streamsides, herbfield, bare land, especially after spraying or other clearance to bare land.

Photo: Trevor James

What can I do to get rid of it?
1. Physical removal - Dig or pull-out small infestations. Dispose of all plant material at a landfill or refuse transfer station. Ensure no plant material is left on site.
2. Foliar spray - Using knapsack apply glyphosate 360 g/L active ingredient at 10ml/L plus organosilicone penetrant at 3ml/L, to cover entire plant. Note: Glyphosate overspray will kill other (desirable) plants.
OR Apply Metsulfuron herbicide 600g/kg active ingredient at 0.5g/L plus organosilicone penetrant at 3ml/L. Note: Metsulfuron overspray will kill other (desirable) broadleaf plants and has residual activity in the soil which aids in killing below ground parts.
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?
Spraying with glyphosate only gives plant more room to expand. Better to overplant with taller spp. In regenerating habitats, often better to leave altogether to minimise disturbance.