

# WEED NOTE <sup>Mid-West</sup>

## Fourleaf allseed

### (*Polycarpon tetraphyllum*)

**FAMILY:** Caryophyllaceae

**STATUS:** Alien<sup>1</sup>.

**TYPE:** Prostrate, annual herb.

**IDENTIFICATION:** *Polycarpon tetraphyllum* (fourleaf allseed) can be distinguished by its flowers, which are tiny and occur in clusters at the ends of stems. The petals are mostly hidden within the calyx (a whorl of leaf-like appendages that surround the flower)<sup>3</sup>.

**DESCRIPTION:** Fourleaf allseed is a small, erect, spreading, or prostrate annual herb to 15 cm tall<sup>1</sup>. The leaves are dark green and oval-shaped and occur in whorls (a ring-like arrangement) of four surrounding the stem<sup>2</sup>. The leaves in each whorl are often two different sizes, with each opposite pair being the same size. The stem, leaves, and calyx can be green to pink.

**DISTRIBUTION:** Fourleaf allseed is native to Europe<sup>3</sup>.

**PREFERRED HABITAT:** Fourleaf allseed is widespread weed of gardens, limestone areas, and Tuart woodlands from Exmouth to Bunbury<sup>3</sup>.

#### KNOWN LOCATIONS IN WA:

Fourleaf allseed occurs along the coastline and a few hundred km inland from Israelite Bay to Onslow<sup>1</sup>.



Plate 1: Mature plant



Plate 2: Leaves



Plate 3: Seedlings



Plate 4: Distinguishing feature

#### THREAT/ IMPACT: Environmental

Fourleaf allseed is a prolific seeder<sup>4</sup>. Its ecological impact has been rated by the Department of Environment and Conservation as low<sup>5</sup>.

#### References

1 Western Australian Herbarium, FloraBase, Department of Environment and Conservation (2012). *Polycarpon tetraphyllum*. Accessed from: <<http://florabase.dec.wa.gov.au/browse/profile/2905>>. [19 September 2012].

2 The University of Queensland (2012). *Polycarpon tetraphyllum*. Accessed from: <[http://keys.lucidcentral.org/keys/v3/UQCenentary/key/UQ\\_Cenentary/Media/Html/polycarpontetraphyllum.htm](http://keys.lucidcentral.org/keys/v3/UQCenentary/key/UQ_Cenentary/Media/Html/polycarpontetraphyllum.htm)>. [19 September 2012].

3 Hussey B.M.J., Keighery, G.J., Dodd, J., Lloyd, S.G., Cousens, R.D., (2007). *Western Weeds A Guide to the Weeds of Western Australia*, (2nd Edition), Weeds Society of Western Australia, Victoria Park, Western Australia.

4 International Environmental Weed Foundation (2007). *Polycarpon tetraphyllum*. Accessed: <[http://www.iewf.org/weedid/Polycarpon\\_tetraphyllum.htm](http://www.iewf.org/weedid/Polycarpon_tetraphyllum.htm)>. [19 September 2012].

5 Department of Environment and Conservation (2009). *Invasive Plant Prioritisation Process for DEC - DEC Pilbara Weed Assessment*. Accessed from: <<http://www.dec.wa.gov.au/content/view/6295/2358/1/1/>>. [19 September 2012].

Author: Jesse Kalic