

WEEDS AND SEEDS INJURIOUS

ANY factor influencing the value of the wool clip is of major importance to New Zealand as a whole and weeds which produce seeds or burrs that devalue wool and sheepskins as industrial products are the concern of every farmer. In the following article R. G. Montgomery, Sheep and Wool Instructor, Department of Agriculture, Hastings, deals with several weeds common to various parts of the North Island and gives the generally-accepted common name and the botanical name of each species, with a short description of the seeds and the manner in which they affect the woollen industry.

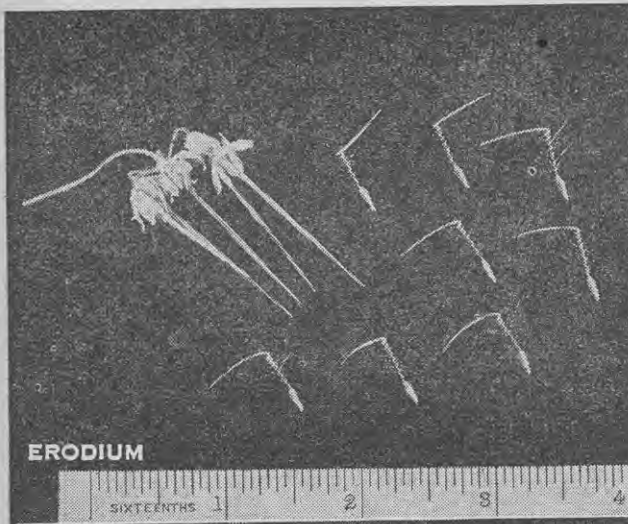
FARMERS should note the name of each weed and use it when referring to the particular seed or plant, as that would obviate much of the confusion caused through common plants being known by two or more different names on adjoining farms.

Stork's Bill

Stork's Bill (*Erodium*) is also known as crow's foot, sheep's parsley, 12 o'clock, and corkscrew. Farmers often confuse the plant with wild parsnip or wild carrot and it is sometimes misnamed black jack by wool buyers and brokers. Black jack (*Stipa variabilis*) is a totally different plant, with a longer though similarly-awned seed, which has a bad reputation in Australia and is known in some parts of Banks Peninsula and Marlborough.

The botanical name *Erodium* comes from the Greek "erodios," a heron, no doubt because of a fancied resemblance between the head of the bird and the seed head of the plant. The seed has a long awn which, as it matures or dries, will wind itself into a tight spiral, the awn turning with a circular motion. The awn is hygroscopic—when the tightly-coiled shaft becomes damp it will immediately begin to unwind, and it is this ability to wind and unwind which gives this type of seed such a bad reputation in the woollen industry.

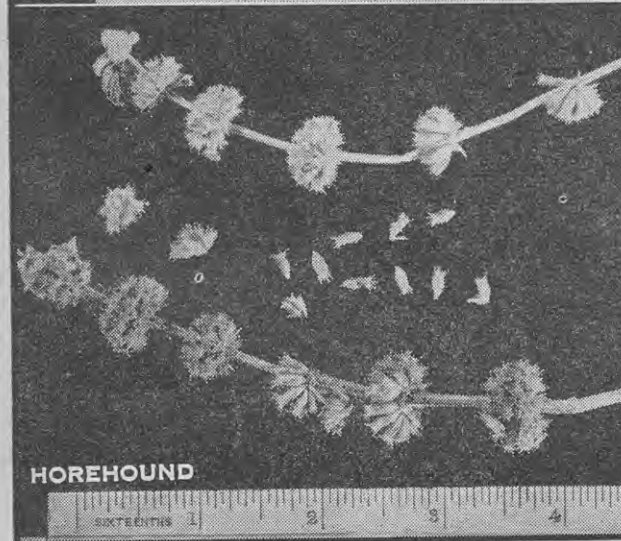
There appears to be difference of opinion as to whether the *Erodium* species are annual or perennial, but most authorities consider them annuals or possibly biennials. Three species are recorded in New Zealand, *Erodium moschatum*, *E. cicutarium*, and *E. malacoides*, with some doubtful hybrids. The plant has a deep tap root, trailing



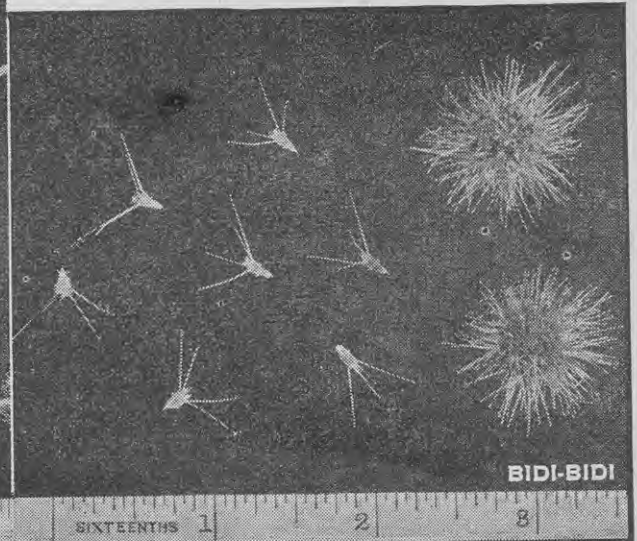
ERODIUM



BARLEY GRASS



HOREHOUND



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