

SPERGULARIA BOCCONEI / *RUBRA*

Spergularia bocconeii looks similar to *S. rubra*. It grows in similar, non-saline or weakly saline, open disturbed places, and is probably overlooked. It is becoming increasingly frequent in western France around harbours (Rich & Hopkins 2003), perhaps associated with the yachting activity; small, trampled plants on harbour walls may need careful examination. In Cornwall it was thought to be declining (French & Rich 2005) but has been found in new sites more recently (I. Bennallick, pers. comm. 2013).

Characters distinguishing the two species are listed in the table. Both species are very variable in overall size, but in general, *S. bocconeii* is smaller, more glandular, and has a rather clumped, erect growth form lacking the 'rosette' of prostrate shoots so typical of most specimens of the usually longer-lived *S. rubra*.

Most plants can be confirmed from the stipules. Stipules are often best seen on the prostrate shoots of the 'rosette', and tend to split as they get older. Stipule shape varies up the stem in both species, the lower stipules being broader than the upper. The stipules of *S. bocconeii* are generally broadly triangular or even deltoid and those of *S. rubra* narrower (Figure 1).

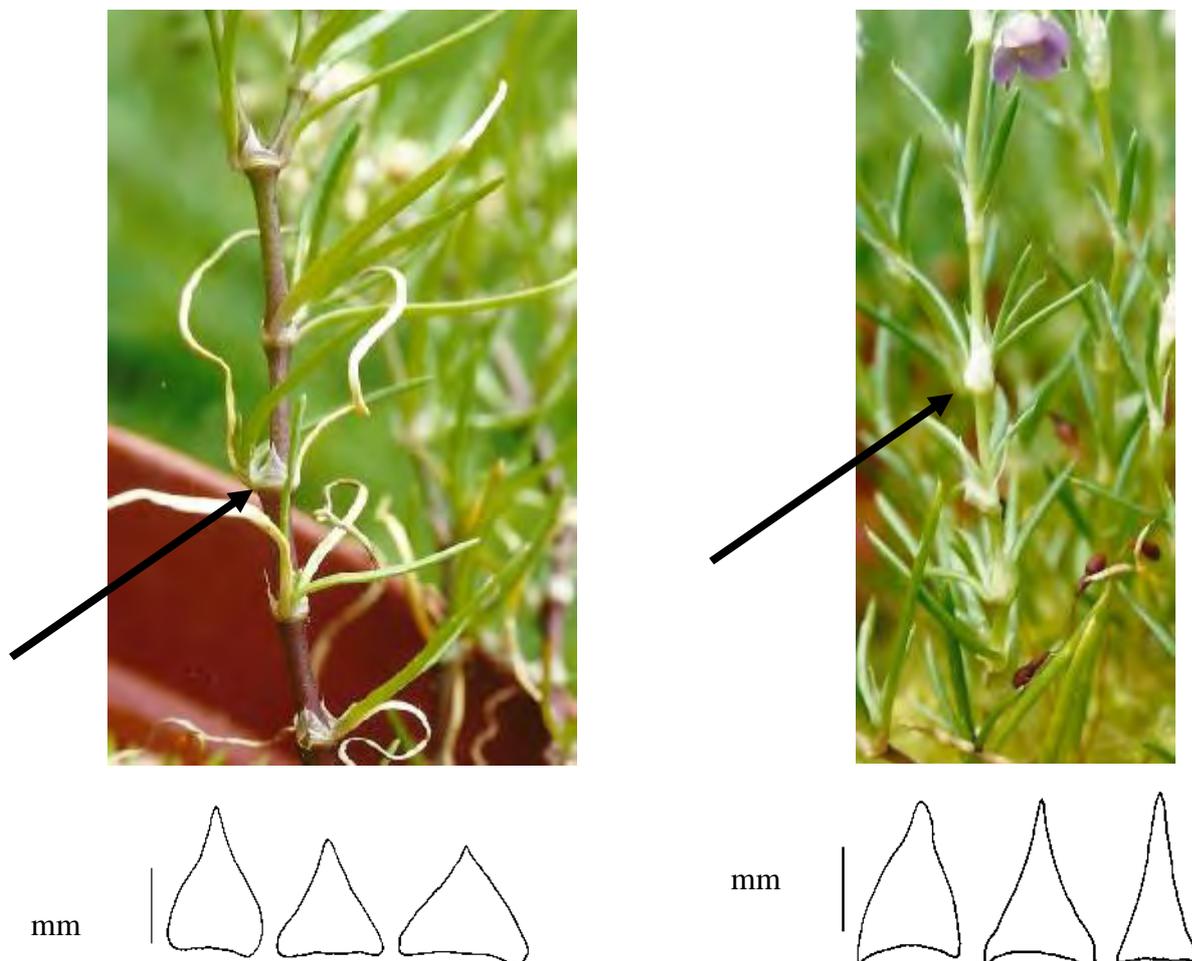


Figure 1. a) *S. bocconeii* stipules

b) *S. rubra* stipules

Plant Crib 3

The flowers of *S. bocconei* are usually pale pink rather than reddish, and the inflorescence is often swept to one side and has very small bracts (or lacks them altogether) in the axils of the stipules (Figure 2). The pedicels of the fruit in mid-inflorescence are about as long as the sepals (generally much longer in *S. rubra*; Figure 3).



Figure 2. *Spargularia bocconei* inflorescence showing secund flowers



Figure 3. *Spargularia rubra* inflorescence.



Figure 4. Flowers of *S. bocconei* (left) and *S. rubra* (right) showing difference in size and colour

Plant Crib 3

Characters distinguishing *Spergularia bocconei* and *S. rubra*. Compiled from Ratter (1986), Monnier & Ratter (1993), and observations of fresh material.

Character	<i>S. bocconei</i> (Scheele) Graebn.	<i>S. rubra</i> (L.) J. & C. Presl
Stem leaves	Weakly fasciculate (clustered in axils); tips mucronate to weakly awned.	Strongly fasciculate; tips long awned (NB tips often lost in older leaves).
Mid stem stipules	Ovate to triangular, hyaline or rather dull (Fig. 1).	Lanceolate to linear-lanceolate, often acuminate, silvery (Fig. 1).
Inflorescence	Often strongly swept to one side (secund); bracts often very reduced compared to stem leaves or absent (Fig. 2).	Weakly or not swept to one side; bracts similar to about one third as long as stem leaves (Fig. 3).
Flowers (mid inflorescence)	Diameter 4.5-6 mm (Fig. 4); sepals 2-3.5 mm; petals pink with white base, or pink above and white below, or rarely white all over; stamens (0-)2-5(-8), average 4.	Diameter about 7 mm (Fig. 4); sepals 3-4(-5) mm; petals uniformly pink or red; stamens 5-10, average 10.
Fruits	Capsules 2-4 mm; pedicels up to <i>c.</i> 20% longer than capsules in lower inflorescence, but as long as or much shorter towards top of inflorescence.	Capsule 3.5-5 mm; pedicels usually much longer than capsules except towards top of inflorescence where they may be about as long.
Seeds	Usually pale greyish-brown	Usually dark brown to almost black

- References** French, C. N. & Rich, T. C. G. (2005). Monitoring the decline of *Spergularia bocconei* (Scheele) Graebn., Greek Sea-Spurrey, in Cornwall. *Botanical Cornwall* **13**: 45-51.
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