

Lythrum portula

COMMON NAME

water purslane

FAMILY

Lythraceae

AUTHORITY

Lythrum portula (L.) D.Webb

FLORA CATEGORY

Vascular – Exotic

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Herbs - Dicotyledons other than Composites

NVS CODE

LYTPOR

CONSERVATION STATUS

Not applicable

BRIEF DESCRIPTION

Creeping mat-forming herb, with pinkish paired round leaves along horizontal creeping stems, rooting where leaf bearing stems touch the soil, flowers inconspicuous at the base of leaf pairs up to 2.5 cm across.

DISTRIBUTION

Scattered from Waikato, Rotorua Lakes, Westland, Otago and Southland.

HABITAT

On bare mud on the margins of water bodies.

WETLAND PLANT INDICATOR STATUS RATING

OBL: Obligate Wetland

Almost always is a hydrophyte, rarely in uplands (non-wetlands).

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Glabrous annual; stems creeping, pinkish, rooting at nodes, often mat-forming. Lvs opposite, shortly petiolate. Lamina 3-12 × 2-8 mm, obovate or suborbicular, entire, somewhat succulent; base attenuate; apex rounded. Fls solitary, ± subsessile, monomorphic. Bracteoles > pedicel. Calyx 1.2-1.5 mm long; tube broad-campanulate; teeth membranous and pinkish except for green margins and mid-vein, acuminate with dark apex; epicalyx segments subulate, green or pink, = or > calyx teeth. Petals 0 (possibly sometimes minute). Stamens 6, always included. Style always very short. Capsule included, c. 2 mm diam., subglobose, membranous, often pinkish. Seed 0.5-0.6 mm long, flat on one face, convex on the other.

SIMILAR TAXA

Unlike other mat forming plants of exposed mud.

FLOWERING

Summer

FLOWER COLOURS

Green, Red/Pink



Erua, February 2006. Photographer: Mike Wilcox, Licence: All rights reserved.



Growing in an ephemeral coastal lagoon, Southland. Photographer: Jesse Bythell, Date taken: 10/03/2023, Licence: CC BY-NC.

FRUITING

Autumn

LIFE CYCLE

Seed dispersed by water, animals or contaminated machinery.

YEAR NATURALISED

1899

ORIGIN

Europe and Western Asia

REASON FOR INTRODUCTION

Unknown, seed or soil contaminant.

CONTROL TECHNIQUES

Not controlled in New Zealand.

ATTRIBUTION

Factsheet prepared by Paul Champion and Deborah Hofstra (NIWA). Features description Webb et al. (1988).

REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

Webb, C.J.; Sykes, W.R.; Garnock-Jones, P.J. (1988). Flora of New Zealand Volume 4: Naturalisedpteridophytes, gymnosperms, dicotyledons. Botany Division, DSIR, Christchurch.

Popay et al (2010). An illustrated guide to common weeds of New Zealand, third edition. NZ Plant Protection Society Inc, 416pp.

Johnson PN, Brooke PA (1989). Wetland plants in New Zealand. DSIR Field Guide, DSIR Publishing, Wellington. 319pp.

Clapham, A.R.; Tutin, T.G.; Warburg, E.F. (1962). Flora of the British Isles. Cambridge University Press, Second Edition. 1269pp.

MORE INFORMATION

<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/lythrum-portula/>