

Senecio quadridentatus

COMMON NAME

cotton fireweed, white fireweed, pahokoraka

SYNONYMS

Erechtites quadridentata (Labill.) DC.

FAMILY

Asteraceae

AUTHORITY

Senecio quadridentatus Labill.

FLORA CATEGORY

Vascular – Native

ENDEMIC TAXON

No

ENDEMIC GENUS

No

ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Herbs - Dicotyledonous composites

NVS CODE

SENQUA

CHROMOSOME NUMBER

$2n = 40$

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2017 | Not Threatened | Qualifiers: SO

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2012 | Not Threatened

2009 | Not Threatened

2004 | Not Threatened

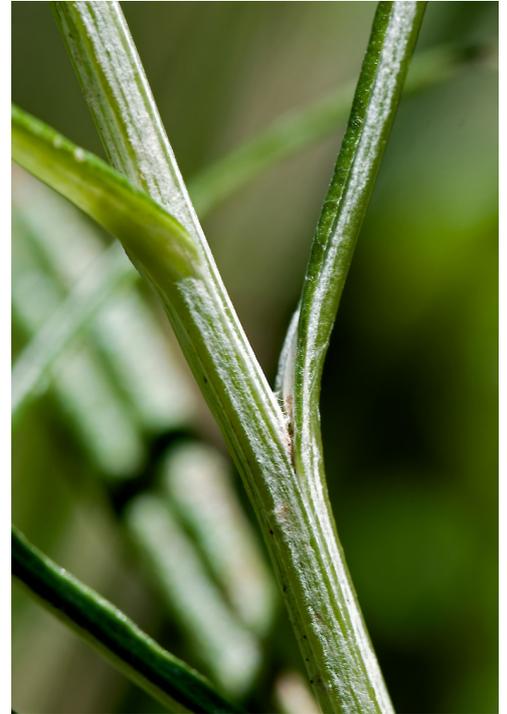
DISTRIBUTION

Indigenous. Three Kings, North, South, Stewart and Chatham Islands.

Present in Australia

HABITAT

Throughout from coastal to subalpine habitats. Always in recently disturbed ground



Leaf base. Remutaka Rail Trail. Photographer: Jeremy R. Rolfe, Date taken: 02/12/2006, Licence: CC BY.



Leaf base. Remutaka Rail Trail. Photographer: Jeremy R. Rolfe, Date taken: 02/12/2006, Licence: CC BY.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Short-lived, usually much branched, perennial herb up to 1 m tall. Stems erect, moderately to densely covered in appressed-cottony hairs. Mid stem leaves more or less evenly spaced and sized., linear to narrow linear, 80-220 mm long, length:width ratio (l:w) 15-40 (or 7-10 if lobes present), mostly entire, rarely dissected or lobed, sometimes coarsely dentate to lobate; segments remote 1-3 per side and mainly in proximal half, spreading, triangular, base attenuate or occasionally with small entire auricles, not amplexicaul; margin entire or with frequent minute denticulations, appearing entire due to revolute margin; upper surface hairs appressed-cobwebby becoming glabrescent; lower surface green or purple-green, moderately to densely woolly. Upper stem leaves similar; auricles more frequent. Unit Inflorescence usually of many capitula; total number of capitula per stem often 50-200; overtopping variable; mature lateral peduncles mostly 5-25 mm long. Calycular bracteoles of capitula 4-8, 1.0-3.0 mm long peduncle and margin of bracteoles cobwebby to woolly at anthesis, or glabrate; involucre 6.0-10.0 x 1.2-2.0 mm; involucral bracts 8-14, basally cobwebby or glabrate, with apex erect; stereomes (in dried material) more or less flat, green or partially purple, sometimes minutely black-tipped or purple in a zone 1 mm long below tip. Florets 18-50, c. 80% female; corolla-lobes triangular, not or hardly thickened apically; corolla of bisexual florets 6-9 mm long, 4-lobed; corolla-lobes of female florets 3, 0.1 mm long. Cypsela 2.2-3.5 mm long, subcylindric, narrow to and constricted below apex, usually with 2-3 rows of hairs in narrow grooves between broad ribs, sometimes glabrous.

SIMILAR TAXA

Senecio dunedinensis Belcher is similar and could be confused. Generally it is a smaller less heavily branched plant, with much wider dark green to purple-green glabrescent leaves. The involucral bracts are 4-6 mm rather than 6-10 mm long. *Senecio quadridentatus* tends to grow at lower elevations than *S. dunedinensis* but at times the two species are sympatric and some of the variation seen between both species may be due to hybridism.

FLOWERING

October-March

FLOWER COLOURS

Yellow

FRUITING

December-May

PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

Easy from fresh seed. The silvery white foliage can be quite attractive but this species is invasive. Prefers full sun.

ETYMOLOGY

senecio: From the Latin senex 'old man' (probably referring to the bearded seeds)

WHERE TO BUY

Not commercially available.

TAXONOMIC NOTES

Unpublished Molecular evidence (nrDNA ITS sequences) held by University of Auckland place this species as sister to *S. marotiri* and *S. dunedinensis*.

ATTRIBUTION

Fact sheet prepared for NZPCN by P.J. de Lange (12 July 2005). Description based on Thompson (2004).

REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

Thompson IR. 2004. Taxonomic studies of Australian *Senecio* (Asteraceae): 1. The disciform species. *Muelleria* 19: 101-214.

NZPCN FACT SHEET CITATION

Please cite as: de Lange, P.J. (Year at time of access): *Senecio quadridentatus* Fact Sheet (content continuously updated). New Zealand Plant Conservation Network.

<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/senecio-quadridentatus/> (Date website was queried)

MORE INFORMATION

<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/senecio-quadridentatus/>