

Tetrachondra hamiltonii

SYNONYMS

Tillaea hamiltonii Kirk nom. nud.

FAMILY

Tetrachondraceae

AUTHORITY

Tetrachondra hamiltonii Petrie ex Oliv.

FLORA CATEGORY

Vascular – Native

ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes

ENDEMIC GENUS

No

ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Herbs - Dicotyledons other than Composites

NVS CODE

TETHAM

CHROMOSOME NUMBER

2n = 72

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2017 | Threatened – Nationally Vulnerable | Qualifiers: DP, Sp

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2012 | Data Deficient | Qualifiers: Sp

2009 | At Risk – Declining | Qualifiers: DP, Sp

2004 | Serious Decline

DISTRIBUTION

Endemic. New Zealand: North Island (NW corner of the Ruahine Ranges), South Island (localised but widespread, with the main centre of distribution in Otago, western Southland, Fiordland), Stewart Island/Rakiura.

HABITAT

A species of open, compact turf communities such as those developed along lake and tarn margins, flushes and seepages. Occasionally found in suitably open sites within forest.

WETLAND PLANT INDICATOR STATUS RATING

FACW: Facultative Wetland

Usually is a hydrophyte but occasionally found in uplands (non-wetlands).

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Creeping perennial herb rooting at nodes forming diffuse to dense turf-like patches. **Stems** fleshy, distinctly angled, square in cross-section, dark striped. **Leaves** opposite, 2 × 2 mm, broadly ovate to obovate-oblong, bright green or mottled with red, fleshy, sparsely covered with indistinct circular oil glands, glabrescent (leaf margins often faintly ciliate), shortly petiolate to sessile, bases decurrent with stem. **Flowers** solitarily, off-white to greenish-white. **Calyx lobes** minute, ovate-triangular. **Corolla lobes** 4, obovate-oblong, pubescent. **Stamens and styles** 4. **Fruit** 4 brown setulose nutlets, broadly elliptic or obovate, (1)–1.1–1.4–(1.5) mm.



Tetrachondra hamiltonii. Photographer: John Barkla, Licence: CC BY.



Catlins. Photographer: John Barkla, Licence: CC BY.

SIMILAR TAXA

Without fruits this diminutive creeping herb could be easily confused with a diverse range of other unrelated turf-forming herbs, e.g., *Nertera* spp., *Crassula* spp., *Galium* spp. However, the distinctive 4-fruited setulose nutlets immediately distinguish it from these and other potential look alikes.

FLOWERING

Flowers may be found throughout the year

FLOWER COLOURS

Green, White

FRUITING

Fruits may be found throughout the year.

PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

Easily grown from the division of whole plants.

THREATS

A naturally uncommon species of open damp turf, seepages, and the marginal turf communities of lakes and tarns. Sometimes in open scrub or damp grassland. Indications are that in parts of its range it is declining, possibly as a consequence of taller, faster growing weeds spreading into the habitats it requires.

ETYMOLOGY

hamiltonii: Named after W. S. Hamilton (of Southland)

WHERE TO BUY

Not commercially available but plants are held by several Botanic Gardens and specialist growers. It is very easily grown but is not particularly attractive.

ATTRIBUTION

Fact Sheet prepared for NZPCN by P.J. de Lange 1 August 2003. Description based on Allan (1961).

REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

Allan HH. 1961. Flora of New Zealand, Volume I. Indigenous Tracheophyta: Psilopsida, Lycopsidea, Filicopsida, Gymnospermae, Dicotyledones. Government Printer, Wellington, NZ. 1085 p.

NZPCN FACT SHEET CITATION

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

MORE INFORMATION

<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/tetrachondra-hamiltonii/>