

# Apium prostratum subsp. prostratum var. filiforme

## COMMON NAME

New Zealand celery

## SYNONYMS

*Petroselinum prostratum* (Labill ex Vent.) DC., *Helosciadium prostratum* (Labill. ex Vent.) Bunge in Lehm., *Petroselinum filiforme* A.Rich., *Apium filiforme* (A.Rich.) Hook., *Apium australe* auct. non Pet.-Thou.

## FAMILY

Apiaceae

## AUTHORITY

*Apium prostratum* subsp. *prostratum* var. *filiforme* (A.Rich.) Kirk

## FLORA CATEGORY

Vascular – Native

## ENDEMIC TAXON

No

## ENDEMIC GENUS

No

## ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

## STRUCTURAL CLASS

Herbs - Dicotyledons other than Composites

## NVS CODE

APIPVF

## CHROMOSOME NUMBER

2n = 22

## CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2017 | Not Threatened | Qualifiers: SO

## PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2012 | Not Threatened

2009 | Not Threatened

2004 | Not Threatened

## DISTRIBUTION

Indigenous. In New Zealand known from the Kermadec, Three Kings, North, South, Stewart and Antipodes Islands. Also in eastern Australia as far north as Brisbane and along the whole coastline of southern Australia and Tasmania

## HABITAT

Coastal and lowland. Very rarely montane. Common on rock ledges, boulder falls, cliff faces, within petrel scrub on damp seepages, in peaty turf, saltmarshes, within estuaries on mud banks, around brackish ponds, and lagoons. Also found in freshwater systems such as around lake and tarn sides, along streams and rivers and in wet hollows occasionally well inland, and sometimes at considerable elevations.



Pautahanui Inlet. Photographer: Jeremy Rolfe



Pautahanui Inlet. Photographer: Jeremy Rolfe

## WETLAND PLANT INDICATOR STATUS RATING

FAC: Facultative

Commonly occurs as either a hydrophyte or non-hydrophyte (non-wetlands).

## FEATURES

Perennial, glabrous, prostrate herb. Stems prostrate, sprawling, often ascending through surrounding vegetation, not rooting at nodes; 0.3-1.2 m long, up to 6 mm diam. Leaves dark green to yellow green, basal ones on long, slender petioles up to 500 mm (usually much less); pinnately 3-foliolate to 1-2-pinnate; segments ovate, obovate to cuneate, deeply incised and toothed; Leaves opposite compound umbels similar though with leaflets divided, elliptic, ovate, obovate or more or less cuneate, primary segments elliptic, ovate, obovate, or more or less cuneate in outline, with overall length 0.5-3x the greatest breadth, ultimate segments to tertiary order 8-74 per leaf. Inflorescences in compound umbels, sessile or pedunculate; peduncle usually present. 2-20 mm x 1-3 mm, usually ebracteate, sometimes one present present, this usually shedding early in umbel maturation. Rays 10-20, 0.4-8 mm long. Petals off-white to cream, with yellow-brown mid vein, ovate 0.75-1.5 x 0.5-1.0 mm, constricted at base, apex acute. Stamens about length of petals, filaments pale yellow to cream; anthers white or pale yellow, 0.3-0.4 x 0.3-0.4 mm. Ovary glabrous, stylopodium disciform; style 0.25-0.40 mm. Mericarps (1.5-)2.0-2.7 mm long, ovate to ovate-oblong, apex narrowed to persistent withered calyx teeth and style remnant, base broad and rounded to weakly cordate; ribs prominent, broad, rounded and spongy. Surface dull yellow to pale brown.

## SIMILAR TAXA

Garden celery (*Apium graveolens*) is occasionally found wild and can look very similar. It is an erect, biennial herb with filiform ribs on the mericarps (fruits). Water celery (*Apium nodiflorum* (L.) Lagasca) is a species of freshwater systems where it grows along drains, river, stream, lake and pond margins. Its umbels are always bracteolate, and the stems root freely at the nodes. The Chatham Island endemic *A. prostratum* subsp. *denticulatum* P.S.Short, differs by its allopatric distribution, and by the leaves opposite the umbels up to 60 mm long; primary leaflets 3-5, leaflets or segments markedly denticulate with 6-36 secondary segments per leaflet only.

## FLOWERING

August - March

## FLOWER COLOURS

Cream, Yellow

## FRUITING

September - July

## LIFE CYCLE

Corky mericarps are dispersed by water (Thorsen et al., 2009).

## PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

Easily grown from fresh seed and whole plants. Being edible and pleasant tasting it could be more widely used as a substitute for celery (*Apium graveolens* L.).

## ETYMOLOGY

**apium:** The ancient Latin name for celery or parsley. Believed to be derived from the Celtic word *apon* 'ditch' and refers to the watery habitat of many species

**prostratum:** Prostrate

**filiforme:** From the Latin *filum* 'thread' and *forma* 'shape', meaning thread-shaped

## NOTES ON TAXONOMY

New Zealand plants of *Apium prostratum* are extremely variable and at least one entity currently included within var. *filiforme* is apparently unnamed. These plants are usually found on muddy ground within saltmarshes, in brackish ponds, and sometimes inland around lakes, stream and river sides. The variant has very slender leaves, often purplish petioles and distinct white piliferous to markedly apiculate leaf apices. It has long been known under the tag names White Denticles and Slender. It warrants more study.

## ATTRIBUTION

Fact sheet prepared by P.J. de Lange for NZPCN (1 June 2013)

## REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

Johnson, A. T., Smith, H. A. (1972). *Plant Names Simplified: Their pronunciation, derivation and meaning*. Landsman Bookshop Ltd: Buckenhill, UK.

Thorsen, M. J.; Dickinson, K. J. M.; Seddon, P. J. 2009. Seed dispersal systems in the New Zealand flora. *Perspectives in Plant Ecology, Evolution and Systematics* 2009 Vol. 11 No. 4 pp. 285-309

## NZPCN FACT SHEET CITATION

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<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/apium-prostratum-subsp-prostratum-var-filiforme/> (Date website was queried)

## MORE INFORMATION

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