

Epilobium pubens

COMMON NAME

willowherb

SYNONYMS

Epilobium pubens var. *strictum* Allan

FAMILY

Onagraceae

AUTHORITY

Epilobium pubens A.Rich.

FLORA CATEGORY

Vascular – Native

ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes

ENDEMIC GENUS

No

ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Herbs - Dicotyledons other than Composites

NVS CODE

EPIPUB

CHROMOSOME NUMBER

2n = 36

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2017 | Not Threatened

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2012 | Not Threatened

2009 | Not Threatened

2004 | Not Threatened

DISTRIBUTION

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

HABITAT

Coastal to subalpine (1-1100 m a.s.l.) but mainly found in the coastal, lowland and lower montane zone. Favouring dry situations on rock outcrops, cliff faces, clay banks or similar semi-shaded to sunny habitats. Often under seral vegetation or under relatively open *Kunzea ericoides* (A.Rich.) Joy Thomps. s.l. dominated vegetation.



Dehiscent capsules and seeds. Remutaka Rail Trail. Photographer: Jeremy R. Rolfe, Date taken: 03/12/2006, Licence: CC BY.



Close up of stem showing complete covering of glandular pubescence. Remutaka Rail Trail. Photographer: Jeremy R. Rolfe, Date taken: 03/12/2006, Licence: CC BY.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Erect sparingly branched (up to 4 branches), slender perennial herb 150-700 mm tall; entire plant densely covered with erect glandular and eglandular hairs, the stems completely pubescent. Petiole 2-18 mm long, winged. Leaves opposite except in and near inflorescence where alternate; lateral veins prominent, 3-4 on each side of midrib; lamina 7-43 x 4-24 mm, dull green, narrowly obovate to broadly ovate, apex subacute to obtuse, base attenuate to rounded; margins serrulate, bearing 8-32 teeth. Inflorescence and flowers nodding. Pedicels 1-3 mm long. Ovaries 10-27 mm long, densely pubescent, with a fine covering of erect eglandular and glandular hairs. Floral tube 0.7-1.0 x 1.5-2.0 mm, internally glabrous or furnished with a few sparse hairs. Sepals 2.5-2.8 x 1.0-1.1 mm, not keeled, densely pubescent with mixtures of erect glandular/eglandular hairs. Petals 3.5-7.0 x 2.9-4.0 mm, white, notch 0.6-2.0 mm deep. Anthers 0.7-0.9 x 0.5-0.6 mm, yellow; filaments white, those of longer stamens 1.7-2.7 mm, shorter 0.8-1.2 mm. Style 2.0-2.8 mm, white, glabrous; stigma 1.5-2.6 x 0.6-0.8 mm, white, clavate. Capsule 2.9-5.3 mm long, densely covered with erect glandular and eglandular hairs; pedicel elongating to 15 mm long. Seeds 0.75-0.92 x 0.35-0.42 mm, dark brown, obovoid, papillose, coma 4-5 mm, detaching readily.

SIMILAR TAXA

Allied to *Epilobium astonii* (Allan) Raven et Engeln from which it differs by its slender scarcely branched, rather than much larger, compact, bushy, growth habit; shorter sepals (2.5-2.8 cf. 5.0-6.5 mm) and petals (3.5-7.0 cf. 7.3-13.0 mm); and by being a much more widespread species, occupying varied substrates and habitats from the coast to upper montane forest and subalpine scrub, rather than being restricted to predominantly greywacke rock within the subalpine to alpine zone of the main axial ranges of the North Island.

FLOWERING

September - April

FLOWER COLOURS

White, Yellow

FRUITING

October - June

LIFE CYCLE

Minute papate seeds are wind dispersed (Thorsen et al., 2009).

PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

Easily grown from fresh seed. Not particularly attractive and inclined to become invasive.

ETYMOLOGY

epilobium: From the Greek epi- 'upon' and lobos 'a pod', the flowers appearing to be growing on the seed pod.

pubens: Downy

WHERE TO BUY

Not commercially available.

ATTRIBUTION

Fact sheet prepared for NZPCN by P.J. de Lange 6 January 2008. Description adapted from Raven & Raven (1976) and Webb & Simpson (2001).

REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

Raven, P.H.; Raven, T.E. 1976: The genus *Epilobium* in Australasia. New Zealand DSIR Bulletin 216. Wellington, Government Printer.

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* 11: 285-309

Webb, C.J.; Simpson, M.J.A. 2011: *Seeds of New Zealand Gymnosperms and Dicotyledons*. Christchurch, Manuka Press.

NZPCN FACT SHEET CITATION

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MORE INFORMATION

<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/epilobium-pubens/>