

# Hypericum pusillum

## COMMON NAME

swamp hypericum

## SYNONYMS

Australasian plants have long been known (incorrectly) as *Hypericum japonicum* Thunb.

## FAMILY

Hypericaceae

## AUTHORITY

*Hypericum pusillum* Choisy

## FLORA CATEGORY

Vascular – Native

## ENDEMIC TAXON

No

## ENDEMIC GENUS

No

## ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

## STRUCTURAL CLASS

Herbs - Dicotyledons other than Composites

## NVS CODE

HYPJAP

## CHROMOSOME NUMBER

2n = 16

## CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2012 | Not Threatened

## PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2009 | Not Threatened

2004 | Not Threatened

## DISTRIBUTION

Indigenous. New Zealand: North, South and Stewart Islands. Also Australia, New Guinea, Malesia, SE Asia, Chian and Japan.

## HABITAT

Coastal to subalpine, on river and stream banks, lake and tarn margins, swamps and bogs, open areas in forest, and damp hollows among tussocks and within cattle-pugged, poorly drained pasture.



Coromandel, February. Photographer: John Smith-Dodsworth



In cultivation ex Pureora. Photographer: Jeremy Rolfe

## FEATURES

Perennial or annual, non-rhizomatous herbs. Stems usually up to 200 mm long, 0.3–0.6 mm diameter, usually prostrate to decumbent, sometimes erect, often with adventitious roots at base, without marginal pellucid glands, quadrangular, usually branched below inflorescence. Leaves sessile, 2.5–9.0 × 1.5–3.5 mm, usually broadly elliptic to elliptic, often strongly sinuate, light green to yellow-green, undersides slightly paler; pellucid glands up to 0.1 mm diameter, translucent in light, >25 glands conspicuous on upper 2/3 of leaf underside, inconspicuous on upper leaf surface; base attenuate; margin usually sinuate; apex subacute to obtuse; main lateral veins 1 to 2, basal, tertiary reticulation not visible. Inflorescence terminal, flowers solitary. Pedicels 3.7–3.8 × 0.3–0.4 mm, green, quadrangular. Flower up to 9 mm diameter; bud cylindrical ellipsoid, apex subacute. Sepals 5, 2.8–4.7 × 0.9–1.4 mm, unequal, free, spreading, oblong, narrow elliptic, or elliptic-oblong, sometimes sinuate, green; margin translucent, glands absent; base free, attenuate; apex subacute to rounded, sometimes with a small apiculus. Petals 5, 2.8–4.0 × 1.7–2.5 mm, pale yellow to dark yellow, obovate to oblong; glands absent; margins entire. Stamens 9, free, c.2.1 × 0.1 mm diameter, translucent, pale yellow, slightly curved, terete; anthers 0.2–0.3 mm long, yellow. Ovary c.1.3 × 1.0–1.1 mm, ovoid, weakly trigonous in cross section, light green; styles 3–4, 0.3–0.5 mm long, spreading, translucent; stigma c.0.2 mm diameter. Capsule 2.8–4.5 × 2.2–3.8 mm, cylindrical to globose, shorter or longer than sepals. Seeds 0.50–0.75 × c. 0.30 mm, testa orange-brown to light yellow, aging to dark brown, oblong to elliptic-oblong, terete, semi-glossy, finely reticulate, longitudinal ribs absent

## SIMILAR TAXA

Most often confused with the introduced *Hypericum humifusum* and indigenous *H. involutum*. From *H. humifusum*, with which it often grows it is easily distinguished by its usually smaller size, leaves with typical undulating margins, which lack the conspicuous band of black glands diagnostic of *H. humifusum*. From *H. involutum*, *H. pusillum* differs by its prostrate rather than erect stems, usually undulate rather than revolute leaf margins, and smaller flowers (5–9 mm cf. 18–16 mm diameter).

## FLOWERING

Throughout the year

## FLOWER COLOURS

Yellow

## FRUITING

Throughout the year

## LIFE CYCLE

Seeds are wind and water dispersed (Thorsen et al., 2009).

## PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

Easily grown from fresh seed and rooted pieces. An attractive ground cover for poorly drained clay soils.

## ETYMOLOGY

**hypericum:** From the Greek hyper (above) and eikon (picture), the plant was hung above pictures to ward off evil spirits

**pusillum:** Insignificant, weak

## ATTRIBUTION

Fact Sheet prepared for the NZPCN by P.J. de Lange (17 April 2011). Description from Heenan (2008).

## REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

Heenan, P.B. 2008: Three newly recognised species of *Hypericum* (Clusiaceae) from New Zealand. *New Zealand Journal of Botany* 46: 547–558.

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.

## NZPCN FACT SHEET CITATION

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**MORE INFORMATION**

<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/hypericum-pusillum/>