

Jacobaea vulgaris

COMMON NAMES

ragwort

BIOSTATUS

Exotic

CONSERVATION STATUS

Not applicable

CATEGORY

Vascular

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Herbs - Dicotyledonous composites

FLOWER COLOURS

Yellow

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Erect biennial or perennial herb, 30~120cm tall. Stems densely lanate above but soon glabrous, usu. branched only above, sometimes branched from base. Basal leaves lanate when young, usu. becoming almost glabrous but often remaining hairy on veins of lower surface, rarely sparsely to moderately hairy on both surfaces, petiolate; petiole < lamina, amplexicaul; lamina lyrate-pinnatifid, obovate to ovate-oblong, obtuse to subacute at apex, 5~20 x 4~6cm; segments ovate, oblong or obovate, 1~2-pinnatisect; venation pinnate. Cauline leaves lyrate-pinnatifid to 1-pinnate; segments again 1~2-pinnatisect; uppermost leaves apetiolate, with narrow segments. Capitula usu. numerous in dense flat-topped corymbs, rarely fewer and more diffuse. Supplementary bracts 3~10, lanceolate, 1.5~3mm long. Involucral bracts 11~14, ovate-oblong, 3~5mm long, usu. glabrous, sometimes with a few scattered hairs. Ray florets 11~13; ligules bright yellow, 5~12mm long. Disc golden-yellow. Achenes terete, 1.4~2.5mm long, those of ray florets glabrous, those of disc florets moderately hairy; pappus 3.5~5mm long, soon deciduous from ray achenes. (-Webb et. al., 1988)

SIMILAR TAXA

An erect herb that commonly grows to a height of 45-60cm; can grow up to 1.6m. Bright yellow flowers with golden yellow disc (Webb et al., 1988). It is distinguished from the related *Jacobaea aquatica* by the more dissected leaves, the usually flat-topped dense flowers and hairy disc achenes (1-seed fruit). Stems are reddish/purple at the base and branch out at the top. The leaves are deeply divided and wrinkled, dark green on top with a paler green, downy lining.

HABITAT

Terrestrial. Especially abundant in areas of higher rainfall (Webb et al., 1988). Plant of open ground and light gaps: wherever there is sufficient bare ground for seeds to germinate and establish. Found mostly in open forests, riverbeds, swamps and pastures. Grows on coastal slopes and along tracks (West, 1996).

GENUS

Jacobaea

FAMILY

Asteraceae



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AUTHORITY

Jacobaea vulgaris Gaertn.

SYNONYMS

Senecio jacobaea

ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

FLOWERING

November, December, January, February, March, April

YEAR NATURALISED

1894

ORIGIN

Europe, W Asia

REASON FOR INTRODUCTION

Accidental

LIFE CYCLE AND DISPERSAL

Biennial or Perennial herb. In autumn, the flowering stems die back and in undisturbed situations the whole plant may die. In the first year of growth a basal rosette is produced and in the second year yellow flowers are produced at the top of the flowering stem which grows from the centre of the rosette (West,1996). Reproduces from crowns, roots and seeds. A well developed multi-stemmed plant is estimated to produce 250,000 seeds a year (80% may be viable). Dispersal of seed via water, animals, vehicles, clothing, hay, chaff. Numerous small seeds are dispersed widely by the wind (West,1996).

WETLAND PLANT INDICATOR STATUS RATING

FACU: Facultative Upland

Occasionally is a hydrophyte but usually occurs in uplands (non-wetlands).

ENVIRONMENTAL WEED (2024)

This plant is named in a list of 386 environmental weeds in New Zealand 2024 prepared by DOC. 759 candidate species were considered for inclusion on this new comprehensive list of environmental weeds in New Zealand. The species considered were drawn from published lists of weed species, lists of plants that must be reported or managed by law if observed, existing national and regional programmes and agreements for pest management, and species already managed by the Department of Conservation (DOC). Candidate species were then assessed to see if they were fully naturalised and whether they have more than minor impacts in natural ecosystems. Read the full report [here](#).

NVS CODE

JACVUL

REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

Pelser PB, Veldkamp J-F, van der Meijden R. 2006. New combinations in *Jacobaea* Mill. (Asteraceae - Senecioneae). Compositae Newsletter 44: 1-11.

MORE INFORMATION

<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/jacobaea-vulgaris/>

PDF DATE

27 May 2026