Lemna aequinoctialis

COMMON NAMES
tropical duckweed

BIOSTATUS
Native

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS
2023 | Non-resident Native – Coloniser | Qualifiers: SO
Jump to previous conservation statuses

CATEGORY
Vascular

STRUCTURAL CLASS
Herbs - Dicotyledons other than Composites

SIMPLIFIED DESCRIPTION
Tiny, surface floating aquatic plant with bright green plate-like leaves (3 × 2 mm) that have a pale underside and one root per leaf.

FLOWER COLOURS
Green

DETAILED DESCRIPTION
Platelets usually with bright green uppersides, paler undersides and one root per platelet. A characteristic of this species is the single root that arises from a winged sheath.

SIMILAR TAXA
The native *Lemna disperma* is very similar but the root does not arise from a winged sheath. *Landoltia* has two or more roots arising from each platelet. Watermeal (*Wolffia australiana*) is much smaller and lacking roots. *Azolla* is an aquatic fern and has scale like leaves that overlap.

DISTRIBUTION
Only collected once from Auckland Zoo.

HABITAT
Clear, still fertile water including, troughs, dams, drains and backwaters.

GENUS
Lemna

FAMILY
Araceae

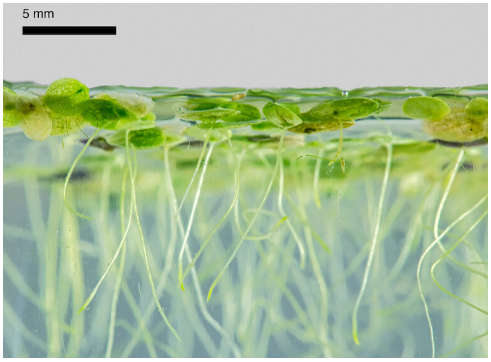
AUTHORITY
Lemna aequinoctialis Welw.

ENDEMIC GENUS
No

ENDEMIC FAMILY
No

FLOWERING
Unknown

FRUITING
Unknown



Matukureia Swamp, Auckland (from material collected by Peter de Lange). Photographer: Jeremy R. Rolfe, Date taken: 02/02/2014, Licence: CC BY.

Root and underside of frond. Matukureia Swamp, Auckland (from material collected by Peter de Lange). Photographer: Jeremy R. Rolfe, Date taken: 02/02/2014, Licence: CC BY.

YEAR NATURALISED
2010

ORIGIN
Throughout the warmer parts of the world, including northern Australia

REASON FOR INTRODUCTION
Probably a contaminant of imported plants or animals.

CONTROL TECHNIQUES
Difficult to control once established.

LIFE CYCLE AND DISPERSAL
These tiny plants are readily spread by waterfowl.

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUS
2017 | Non-resident Native – Coloniser | Qualifiers: SO
Jump to current conservation status

REGIONAL CONSERVATION STATUSES
Auckland: 2025 | Regionally Data Deficient | Qualifiers: DPR, SO Help
The regional threat classification system leverages off the national assessments in the NZTCS, providing information relevant for the regional context. Auckland conservation status information is sourced from the "Conservation status of vascular plant species in Tāmaki Makaurau / Auckland" Simpkins E et al. (2025) report.

REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING
Crawford DJ, Landolt E, Les DH, Kimball RT. 2001. Allozyme studies in Lemnaceae. *Taxon 50(4)*: 987–999. https://doi.org/10.2307/1224716.

ATTRIBUTION
Factsheet prepared by Paul Champion and Deborah Hofstra (NIWA).

MORE INFORMATION
https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/lemna-aequinoctialis/

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