Leptinella potentillina

BIOSTATUS
Native – Endemic taxon

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS
2023 | At Risk – Naturally Uncommon | Qualifiers: RR
Jump to previous conservation statuses

CATEGORY
Vascular

STRUCTURAL CLASS
Herbs - Dicotyledonous composites

FLOWER COLOURS
Green, Yellow

DETAILED DESCRIPTION
Stout, rather robust, fleshy, diffusely creeping to densely compact turf forming, monoecious, perennial herb. Rhizomes on soil surface, rather thick, fleshy, pale yellow, cream or white, sparsely pilose hairy; branches usually single at flowering nodes, leaves in two rows, single at apex, 50-40 mm apart. Short shoots alternate on both sides of rhizome, with clustered leaves, sometimes converted into rhizomes with distant leaves. Roots slender and weak up to 0.5 mm diameter. Leaves 1-pinnatifid, 20-120 x 4-30 mm; blade 10-80 mm, obovate, fleshy, yellow-green, without brown pigmentation, glabrous or glabrescent, midrib slightly raised on proximal part of ventral surface; pinnae 6-15 pairs, not overlapping, cut to rhachis or distal most sinuses, not quite reaching rhachis in larger leaves, elliptic; teeth on most pinnae, up to 12 per pinna, almost equally on distal and proximal margins, cut 1/4 across pinnae, triangular, obtuse or acute, occasionally themselves bearing 1-2 teeth. Peduncles usually on rhizomes, stout, > leaves 20-70 mm, ebracteate or with 1 bract, sparsely pilose hairy. Capitula 5-8 mm diameter, hemispherical to steeply convex; involucre flat or spreading; involucral bracts 15-30, 2- or more subequally seriate, elliptic to oblong, yellow-green, glabrescent, with a narrow transparent, scarious margin, not elongating after anthesis; pistillate florets 60-200, in 4-6 rows, 2 mm long, curved, yellow-green, yellow to lemon yellow, corolla slightly longer than wide, unequally toothed; staminate florets more numerous. Cypsela up to 1.5 x 0.8 mm, brown when maturity, slightly compressed, initially chartaceous maturing with a smooth surface.



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SIMILAR TAXA
The extremely robust, usually yellow-green leaves and flowering scapes with yellow-green, yellow to lemon-yellow capitula immediately mark this species out from other New Zealand Leptinella species. It is perhaps most similar to L. tenella , a North and northern South Island species, from which it is allopatric. L. potentillina differs from L. tenella by its much larger, robust habit, and evenly yellow-green rather than bright green coloured leaves which are 20-150 cf 10-40 mm long.

DISTRIBUTION
Endemic. Auckland and Chatham Islands

HABITAT
Coastal, usually in or near seepages subject to a tidal influence, also a component of damp turfs, estuarine vegetation, sand dunes and damp sandy hollows. On the Chatham Islands is often conspicuous on the sand beaches of the lagoon.

THREATS
Not threatened, being very common on the Chatham Islands, though much less so on the Auckland Islands, where it mainly known Adams Island. However, it is listed because it is an island endemic, occupying a small (by global standards) geographic area

GENUS
Leptinella

FAMILY
Asteraceae

AUTHORITY
Leptinella potentillina F.Muell.

SYNONYMS
Cotula potentillina (F.Muell.) Druce, Cotula muelleri Kirk

ENDEMIC TAXON
Yes

ENDEMIC GENUS
No

ENDEMIC FAMILY
No

FLOWERING
August - February

FRUITING
September - July

LIFE CYCLE AND DISPERSAL
Papery cypselae are dispersed by wind and possibly attachment (Thorsen et al., 2009).

PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE
Easy from rooted pieces. An attractive plant for a rockery or lawn. Does best in damp sunny situations. The spectacular, large, yellow-green, ferny leaves and robust yellow-green, yellow to lemon-yellow capitula make this an especially attractive species worthy of wider cultivation.

WETLAND PLANT INDICATOR STATUS RATING
FAC: Facultative
Commonly occurs as either a hydrophyte or non-hydrophyte (non-wetlands).

CULTIVATION
Occasionally sold by specialist native plant nurseries. On the West Coast of the South Island, an extremely robust Leptinella, usually sold in the nursery trade as L. dioica Hook.f., or L. cv. Seal Island occurs, and this plant is superficially similar to L. potentillina, differing mainly by its dioecious flowerign habit, erect, dark green leaves and by the pinnae which are markedly less toothed.

PLANT OF THE MONTH
This plant has been featured as a Plant of the Month – see Trilepidea: NZPCN newsletter for July 2011 for the full story.

ETYMOLOGY
leptinella: From the Greek word leptos (meaning slender, thin or delicate), referring to the ovary

NVS CODE
LEPPOT

CHROMOSOME NUMBER
2n = 52

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2017 | At Risk – Naturally Uncommon | Qualifiers: RR
2012 | At Risk – Naturally Uncommon | Qualifiers: RR
2009 | At Risk – Naturally Uncommon | Qualifiers: IE
2004 | Range Restricted
Jump to current conservation status

REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

Lloyd, D.G. 1972: A revision of the New Zealand, Subantarctic, and South American species of *Cotula*, section *Leptinella*. *New Zealand Journal of Botany 10*: 277-372.
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

ATTRIBUTION

Fact sheet prepared for NZPCN by P.J. de Lange 31 August 2006. Description from Lloyd (1972) - as Cotula potentillina.

MORE INFORMATION

https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/leptinella-potentillina/

PDF DATE

25 August 2026