# Leptinella squalida subsp. mediana

## BIOSTATUS
Native – Endemic taxon

## CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS
2023 | Not Threatened
Jump to previous conservation statuses

## CATEGORY
Vascular

## STRUCTURAL CLASS
Herbs - Dicotyledonous composites

## FLOWER COLOURS
Green, Yellow

## DETAILED DESCRIPTION
Dioecious, widely creeping, fast-growing perennial herb forming dense monospecific turfs or intermingled with other turf species. Rhizomes at or near soil surface, dark green to red-green, flexible, pilose hairy; branches usually single at flowering nodes; leaves in two rows, single at apex, 5-30 mm apart. Short shoots alternate on both sides of the rhizomes with distant leaves. Roots slender and weak, up to 0.8 mm diameter. Leaves 1-pinnatifid, 5-10(-20) x 3-20 mm; blade 4-6(-10) mm, yellow-green, yellow-red to purple-brown with basal 1/3-1/2 brown-pigmented and/or the proximal pinnae, elliptic or obovate, membranous, sparsely pilose hairy to moderately pilose hairy, midrib raised along majority of ventral surface; pinnae 6-20 pairs, oblong to elliptic; length greater than width, equidistant along blade, set at a wide angle to the blade and cut to rhachis; teeth usually present on pinnae with up to 10 per pinna, oblong to acute, acuminate. Peduncles borne on rhizomes, sparsely pilose hairy, usually longer than leaves, 10-60 mm, ebracteate or with 1 simple bract. Pistillate capitula 3-5 mm elongating to 10 mm diameter in fruit; surface convex; involucre urceolate; involucral bracts 15-40, subequally 3- or more seriate, green, broadly elliptic, somewhat villous, with a broad brown-tipped scarious margin; inner bracts elongating after anthesis to enclose subglobose fruiting head; florets 15-70, 2.2.5 mm long, yellow-green, curved, corolla slightly longer than wide, dentition unequal. Staminate heads 4-7 mm diameter; involucre hemispherical; involucral bracts 5-10, uni- or biseriate, not extending after anthesis; florets more numerous. Cypsela 1.9 x 0.9 mm, initially pale, chartaceous and wrinkled, maturing brown and smooth.

In cultivation ex Barrytown Flats, West Coast. Photographer: Peter J de Lange, Date taken: 10/12/2006, Licence: CC BY-NC.

Steele Creek, Greenstone. Photographer: John Barkla, Date taken: 31/03/2013, Licence: CC BY.

## SIMILAR TAXA
Differs from *L. squalida* Hook.f. subsp. *squalida* by its more divided leaves with all pinnae cut to rhachis, equidistant and set at a wide angle to the rhachis. It also differs cytologically with at least three different ctyotypes recognised (2n = 156, 208 and 260 cf. uniformly 2n = 260 in subsp. *squalida*). It is most likely to be confused with *L. pusilla* Hook.f. from which it differs by its rhizomes set above or near the soil surface, rather than deeply buried, the short shoots arising from both sides of, rather than from above the rhizome, the absence of scales on the rhizomes, and markedly less hairy leaves (in most populations anyway!).

## DISTRIBUTION
Endemic. South and Stewart Islands, widespread and abundant

## HABITAT
Coastal to alpine (0-2000 m a.s.l.), often found on river beds, cobble or sand beaches, in short tussock grassland, in alpine herbfields and sometimes in lowland wet depressions and ephemeral wetlands.

## GENUS
Leptinella

## FAMILY
Asteraceae

## AUTHORITY
Leptinella squalida subsp. mediana (D.G.Lloyd) D.G.Lloyd et C.J.Webb

## SYNONYMS
Cotula squalida subsp. mediana D.G.Lloyd

## ENDEMIC TAXON
Yes

## ENDEMIC GENUS
No

## ENDEMIC FAMILY
No

## FLOWERING
August - February

## FRUITING
October - April

## PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE
Easy from rooted pieces. An excellent lawn cover, tolerant of extremes of sun, shade and moisture and human traffic

## WETLAND PLANT INDICATOR STATUS RATING
FACW: Facultative Wetland
Usually is a hydrophyte but occasionally found in uplands (non-wetlands).

## CULTIVATION
Commonly sold by most retail plant and specialist native plant nurseries.

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

## NVS CODE
LEPMED

## CHROMOSOME NUMBER
2n = 156, 208, 260

## PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES
2017 | Not Threatened
2012 | Not Threatened
2009 | Not Threatened
2004 | Not Threatened
Jump to current conservation status

## REGIONAL CONSERVATION STATUSES

Otago: 2025 | Regionally Not Threatened Help

The regional threat classification system leverages off the national assessments in the NZTCS, providing information relevant for the regional context. Otago conservation status information is sourced from the "Conservation Status of Indigenous Vascular Plants in Otago, 2025" Jarvie S et al. (2025) report.

## 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.

## ATTRIBUTION

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

## NZPCN FACT SHEET CITATION

Please cite as: de Lange, P.J. (Year at time of access): Leptinella squalida subsp. mediana Fact Sheet (content continuously updated). New Zealand Plant Conservation Network. https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/leptinella-squalida-subsp-mediana/ (Date website was queried)

## MORE INFORMATION

https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/leptinella-squalida-subsp-mediana/

## PDF DATE

25 May 2026