

Lotus pedunculatus

COMMON NAME

lotus

FAMILY

Fabaceae

AUTHORITY

Lotus pedunculatus Cav.

FLORA CATEGORY

Vascular – Exotic

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Herbs - Dicotyledons other than Composites

NVS CODE

LOTPED

BRIEF DESCRIPTION

Scrambling herb, either forming dense yellow flowered patches or scrambling through other vegetation, leaves with 5 lobes, small (c. 1 cm) yellow, pea-like flowers in groups of 12 or more at the branch tips.

DISTRIBUTION

Common in higher rainfall areas throughout New Zealand.

HABITAT

Terrestrial. Especially common in wetter areas. Waste places, pasture, frequently along drains and in swamps.

FEATURES

Clover-like perennial legume, scrambling to 1 m (2 m if supported). Roots fibrous. Stems with stolons, hollow, hairless to moderately hairy, woody at base often dying back to base in dry conditions. Leaves stalkless, 3-foliolate with 2 smaller leaflets (stipules) at base, usually with a few hairs beneath and on margins; leaflets 8-22 mm long, with conspicuous lateral veins. Flowers pea-like, 11-13 mm long, fragrant, golden yellow; clustered 5-12 on stalk 12-15 cm long, Nov-Mar. Seed pods straight, thin, 15-35 mm long.

SIMILAR TAXA

L. angustissimus slender birdsfoot trefoil is a shaggy-hairy annual, with reddish, wiry stems, flowers 1-2 clustered. *L. suaveolens* hairy birdsfoot trefoil has orange-yellow flowers, pods radiating from a point (like a birdsfoot), stems hairy, prostrate, not woody; leaves hairy. *L. tenuis* has small thin leaflets; few, small, yellow (occ orange reddish) flowers. Other *Lotus* spp and new cvs of *L. pedunculatus* (e.g. Maku) used as pasture, crop and plantation forestry pre-plant species.

FLOWERING

November, December, January

FLOWER COLOURS

Yellow

FRUITING

Summer and autumn



Lotus pedunculatus. Photographer: John Smith-Dodsworth



Lotus pedunculatus. Photographer: John Smith-Dodsworth

LIFE CYCLE

Perennial. Seed dispersed by water or contaminated machinery as well as by animals via dung and intentional plantings.

Forms persistent seedbank. Stems running along the ground capable of forming new plants at the tips (Webb et al., 1988).

YEAR NATURALISED

1867

ORIGIN

Europe, Asia and North Africa

REASON FOR INTRODUCTION

Pasture species

CONTROL TECHNIQUES

Not controlled in New Zealand.

TOLERANCES

Tolerates wet to dampish, hot to cold, poor soils, low fertility (fixes nitrogen), little shade, grazing.

ATTRIBUTION

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

REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

Webb, C.J.; Sykes, W.R.; Garnock-Jones, P.J. (1988). Flora of New Zealand Volume 4: Naturalised pteridophytes, gymnosperms, dicotyledons. Botany Division, DSIR, Christchurch. 1365 pp.

Popay et al (2010). An illustrated guide to common weeds of New Zealand, third edition. NZ Plant Protection Society Inc, 416pp.

Johnson PN, Brooke PA (1989). Wetland plants in New Zealand. DSIR Field Guide, DSIR Publishing, Wellington. 319pp.

MORE INFORMATION

<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/lotus-pedunculatus/>