

# Lotus pedunculatus

## COMMON NAMES

lotus

## BIOSTATUS

Exotic

## CONSERVATION STATUS

Not applicable

## CATEGORY

Vascular

## STRUCTURAL CLASS

Herbs - Dicotyledons other than Composites

## SIMPLIFIED 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.

## FLOWER COLOURS

Yellow

## DETAILED DESCRIPTION

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.

## 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.

## GENUS

*Lotus*

## FAMILY

Fabaceae

## AUTHORITY

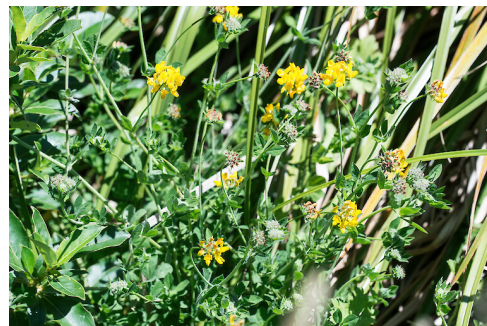
*Lotus pedunculatus* Cav.

## ENDEMIC FAMILY

No



Kaitoke, Upper Hutt. Photographer: Jeremy R. Rolfe, Date taken: 22/11/2012, Licence: CC BY.



Stokes Valley, Lower Hutt. Photographer: Jeremy R. Rolfe, Date taken: 30/12/2016, Licence: CC BY.

## **FLOWERING**

November, December, January

## **FRUITING**

Summer and autumn

## **YEAR NATURALISED**

1867

## **ORIGIN**

Europe, Asia and North Africa

## **REASON FOR INTRODUCTION**

Pasture species

## **TOLERANCES**

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

## **CONTROL TECHNIQUES**

Not controlled in New Zealand.

## **LIFE CYCLE AND DISPERSAL**

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).

## **WETLAND PLANT INDICATOR STATUS RATING**

FAC: Facultative

Commonly occurs as either a hydrophyte or non-hydrophyte (non-wetlands).

## **NVS CODE**

LOTPED

## **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.

## **ATTRIBUTION**

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

## **MORE INFORMATION**

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

## **PDF DATE**

08 June 2026