Ludwigia palustris

COMMON NAMES
Water purslane, marsh ludwigia

BIOSTATUS
Exotic

CONSERVATION STATUS
Not applicable

CATEGORY
Vascular

STRUCTURAL CLASS
Herbs - Dicotyledons other than Composites

SIMPLIFIED DESCRIPTION
A wetland or aquatic, and sometimes submerged perennial species. The slender stems are often reddish when submerged, and may be creeping, floating or prostrate and rooting at the nodes. The flowers are solitary, small, green and stalkless. Leaves are glossy, oval and occur in opposite pairs.



Ludwigia palustris. Photographer: Lisa Forester, Licence: CC BY-SA.

FLOWER COLOURS
Green

DETAILED DESCRIPTION
Hairless herb, sometimes forming dense patches. Glossy ovate leaves up to 3 cm long. The leaves 4 x 2 cm occur in opposite pairs with submerged leaves often red to bronze in colour, petiole to about 1.5 cm long. The stems are often red in colour, creeping or floating and rooting at the nodes. The small green flowers may be tinged with red, do not have petals, but have four broad sepals, and occur in the axils of leaves. The small (4.5 by 2.5 mm) seed capsules have green ribs and the sepals persist. Seeds 0.5 mm long, in several rows.



Stem node and flower bud. Whanganui. Feb 2013. Photographer: Colin C. Ogle, Licence: CC BY-NC.

SIMILAR TAXA
Ludwigia repens is very similar with opposite leaves and creeping habit, but can be distinguished by the yellow petalled flowers. Ludwigia peploides subsp. montevidensis and alligator weed (Alternanthera philoxeroides). Alligator weed also has opposite leaves, and L. peploides subsp montevidensis has yellow flowers and alternate leaves.

DISTRIBUTION
Widespread and common in the North Island and northern and western South Island

HABITAT
Still and slow flowing shallow water bodies, swamps and fens.

GENUS
Ludwigia

FAMILY
Onagraceae

AUTHORITY
Ludwigia palustris (L.) Elliott

ENDEMIC FAMILY
No

FLOWERING
November to April.

YEAR NATURALISED
1933

ORIGIN
Native to North America and possibly temperate Eurasia.

REASON FOR INTRODUCTION
Ornamental aquarium and pond plant.

CONTROL TECHNIQUES
Rarely problematic

LIFE CYCLE AND DISPERSAL
Spreads vegetatively by rooting at nodes and fragments dispersed water flow. Can also set seed.

WETLAND PLANT INDICATOR STATUS RATING
OBL: Obligate Wetland
Almost always is a hydrophyte, rarely in uplands (non-wetlands).

ETYMOLOGY
palustris: From the Latin palus 'swamp', meaning growing in swamps

NVS CODE
LUDPAL

REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING
Johnson PN, Brooke PA (1989). Wetland plants in New Zealand. DSIR Field Guide, DSIR Publishing, Wellington. 319pp.
Aston, H (1977). Aquatic plants of Australia. Melbourne University Press, 367PP.; Popay et al (2010). An illustrated guide to common weeds of New Zealand, third edition. NZ Plant Protection Society Inc, 416pp.
Coffey BT, Clayton JS (1988). New Zealand water plants: a guide to plants found in New Zealand freshwaters. Ruakura Agricultural Cente. 65pp.
DiTomaso JM, EA Healy (2003). Aquatic and riparian weeds of the west. University of California Agriculture and Natural Resources Publication 3421, 462pp.
WSDE (2001). An aquatic plant identification manual for Washington's freshwater plants. Washington State Department of Ecology, 195pp.

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

MORE INFORMATION
https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/ludwigia-palustris/

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