

Ludwigia palustris

COMMON NAME

Water purslane, marsh ludwigia

FAMILY

Onagraceae

AUTHORITY

Ludwigia palustris (L.) Elliott

FLORA CATEGORY

Vascular – Exotic

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Herbs - Dicotyledons other than Composites

NVS CODE

LUDPAL

BRIEF 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.

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.

FEATURES

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.

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.

FLOWERING

November to April.

FLOWER COLOURS

Green

LIFE CYCLE

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

YEAR NATURALISED

1933



Ludwigia palustris. Photographer: John Smith-Dodsworth



Ludwigia palustris. Photographer: John Smith-Dodsworth

ORIGIN

Native to North America and possibly temperate Eurasia.

REASON FOR INTRODUCTION

Ornamental aquarium and pond plant.

CONTROL TECHNIQUES

Rarely problematic

ETYMOLOGY

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

ATTRIBUTION

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

REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

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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.

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WSDE (2001). An aquatic plant identification manual for Washington's freshwater plants. Washington State Department of Ecology, 195pp.

MORE INFORMATION

<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/ludwigia-palustris/>