

Lythrum portula

COMMON NAMES

water purslane

BIOSTATUS

Exotic

CONSERVATION STATUS

Not applicable

CATEGORY

Vascular

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Herbs - Dicotyledons other than Composites

SIMPLIFIED DESCRIPTION

Creeping mat-forming herb, with pinkish paired round leaves along horizontal creeping stems, rooting where leaf bearing stems touch the soil, flowers inconspicuous at the base of leaf pairs up to 2.5 cm across.

FLOWER COLOURS

Green, Red/Pink

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Glabrous annual; stems creeping, pinkish, rooting at nodes, often mat-forming. Lvs opposite, shortly petiolate. Lamina 3-12 × 2-8 mm, obovate or suborbicular, entire, somewhat succulent; base attenuate; apex rounded. Fls solitary, ± subsessile, monomorphic. Bracteoles > pedicel. Calyx 1.2-1.5 mm long; tube broad-campanulate; teeth membranous and pinkish except for green margins and mid-vein, acuminate with dark apex; epicalyx segments subulate, green or pink, = or > calyx teeth. Petals 0 (possibly sometimes minute). Stamens 6, always included. Style always very short. Capsule included, c. 2 mm diam., subglobose, membranous, often pinkish. Seed 0.5-0.6 mm long, flat on one face, convex on the other.

SIMILAR TAXA

Unlike other mat forming plants of exposed mud.

DISTRIBUTION

Scattered from Waikato, Rotorua Lakes, Westland, Otago and Southland.

HABITAT

On bare mud on the margins of water bodies.

GENUS

Lythrum

FAMILY

Lythraceae

AUTHORITY

Lythrum portula (L.) D.Webb

FLOWERING

Summer

FRUITING

Autumn



Growing in an ephemeral coastal lagoon, Southland. Photographer: Jesse Bythell, Date taken: 10/03/2023, Licence: CC BY-NC.



Erua, February 2006. Photographer: Mike Wilcox, Licence: All rights reserved.

YEAR NATURALISED

1899

ORIGIN

Europe and Western Asia

REASON FOR INTRODUCTION

Unknown, seed or soil contaminant.

CONTROL TECHNIQUES

Not controlled in New Zealand.

LIFE CYCLE AND DISPERSAL

Seed dispersed by water, animals or contaminated machinery.

WETLAND PLANT INDICATOR STATUS RATING

OBL: Obligate Wetland

Almost always is a hydrophyte, rarely in uplands (non-wetlands).

NVS CODE

LYTPOR

REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

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

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

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ATTRIBUTION

Factsheet prepared by Paul Champion and Deborah Hofstra (NIWA). Features description Webb et al. (1988). Some of this factsheet information is derived from [Flora of New Zealand Online](#) and is used under a [Creative Commons Attribution 3.0 New Zealand](#) licence.

MORE INFORMATION

<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/lythrum-portula/>

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