Lythrum portula

COMMON NAME
water purslane

FAMILY
Lythraceae

AUTHORITY
Lythrum portula (L.) D.Webb

FLORA CATEGORY
Vascular – Exotic

STRUCTURAL CLASS
Herbs - Dicotyledons other than Composites

NVS CODE
LYTPOR

BRIEF 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.

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

HABITAT
On bare mud on the margins of water bodies.

FEATURES
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.

FLOWERING
Summer

FLOWER COLOURS
Green, Red/Pink

FRUITING
Autumn

LIFE CYCLE
Seed dispersed by water, animals or contaminated machinery.

YEAR NATURALISED
1899

ORIGIN
Europe and Western Asia
REASON FOR INTRODUCTION
Unknown, seed or soil contaminant.

CONTROL TECHNIQUES
Not controlled in New Zealand.

ATTRIBUTION
Factsheet prepared by Paul Champion and Deborah Hofstra (NIWA). Features description Webb et al. (1988).

REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

MORE INFORMATION