

Myriophyllum propinquum

COMMON NAMES

common water milfoil

BIOSTATUS

Native – Endemic taxon

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2023 | Not Threatened | Qualifiers: SO

[Jump to previous conservation statuses](#)

CATEGORY

Vascular

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Herbs - Dicotyledons other than Composites

FLOWER COLOURS

White, Yellow

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Weak aquatic or semiaquatic or terrestrial herb (50-)100-250(-400) mm tall; stems weak, slender, 1.0-1.5(-3.0) mm diameter, rooting at lower nodes; glabrous. Leaves distinctly dimorphic. Submerged leaves in whorls of 3-4(-5), ovate to orbicular in outline, (6-)10-20(-25) × 10-16(-25) mm, pectinate with 10-22 filiform pinnae 5-6(-20) mm long, with distinct petiole 1-2 mm long. Emergent leaves in whorls of (2-)3-4(-5), linear, (2-)5-7(-12) × 0.5-1.0(-1.5) mm, usually flattened but occasionally terete to filiform, spreading or slightly curved upwards, margin entire or sometimes weakly toothed. Rarely, all or most emergent leaves pinnatifid, 4-5 × 1.5-3.5 mm wide with pinnae to 1.5 mm long. Transitional leaves usually 1-2(-4) whorls only. Inflorescence an indeterminate spike with the unisexual flowers borne singly in axils of the emergent leaves. Each whorl contains flowers of 1 sex only, male in upper 1-8 whorls, female in lower 2-6 whorls, with usually 1-2 sterile whorls between. Occasionally all whorls (up to 20) contain female flowers only. All flowers subtended by 2 bracteoles. Bracteoles ovate, (0.4-)0.5-0.8 × (0.2-)0.4-0.5 mm wide, slightly lacinate towards tip or entire. Male flowers 4-merous, sessile or becoming shortly pedicellate. Sepals 4, ovate, 0.4-0.6 × 0.3-0.4 mm, weakly toothed near apex. Petals 4, hooded, very weakly keeled, 1.8-2.7(-3.0) × 1.4 mm, becoming reflexed and inrolled after anthesis. Stamens 8; filaments 1-2 mm long, elongating after anthesis; anthers yellow, linear-oblong, 1.7-2.4 × 0.4-0.5 mm, antisepalous anthers c. 0.2 mm longer than antipetalous ones. Styles 0. Ovary vestigial. Female flowers 4-merous, sessile. Sepals, petals and stamens 0. Styles 4, clavate, 0.2-0.3 mm long, stigmas occupying most of length of style, white, fimbriate. Ovary 4-merous, oblong, 0.7-0.8 mm long (excluding styles), 0.7 mm wide; carpels cylindrical, smooth, with styles on outermost corners. Fruit pale yellow-brown, cylindrical, sessile, splitting at maturity into 4 mericarps. Mericarps 0.8-1.1 mm long, 0.4-0.5 mm diameter, smooth apart from scattering of very small asperities on outer face, crowned by persistent base of style.

GENUS

Myriophyllum

FAMILY

Haloragaceae



Flowers. Wairarapa. Photographer: Jeremy R. Rolfe, Date taken: 07/04/2007, Licence: CC BY.



Whorl of leaves. Wairarapa. Photographer: Jeremy R. Rolfe, Date taken: 07/04/2007, Licence: CC BY.

AUTHORITY

Myriophyllum propinquum A.Cunn.

ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes

ENDEMIC GENUS

No

ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

Easily grown from fresh seed and rooted pieces. An excellent plant for pond, slow flowing stream or fish tank.

WETLAND PLANT INDICATOR STATUS RATING

OBL: Obligate Wetland

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

ETYMOLOGY

myriophyllum: Many leaves

propinquum: Very like the next species

NVS CODE

MYRPRO

CHROMOSOME NUMBER

2n = 14

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2017 | Not Threatened | Qualifiers: SO

2012 | Not Threatened

2009 | Not Threatened

2004 | Not Threatened

[Jump to current conservation status](#)

REGIONAL CONSERVATION STATUSES

Auckland: 2025 | Regionally Not Threatened | Qualifiers: DPS, DPT Help

The regional threat classification system leverages off the national assessments in the NZTCS, providing information relevant for the regional context. Auckland conservation status information is sourced from the [“Conservation status of vascular plant species in Tāmaki Makaurau / Auckland”](#) Simpkins E et al. (2025) report.

Otago: 2025 | Regionally Not Threatened Help

The regional threat classification system leverages off the national assessments in the NZTCS, providing information relevant for the regional context. Otago conservation status information is sourced from the [“Conservation Status of Indigenous Vascular Plants in Otago, 2025”](#) Jarvie S et al. (2025) report.

REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

Orchard, A.E. 1979: *Myriophyllum* (Haloragaceae) in Australasia. 1. New Zealand: a revision of the genus and a synopsis of the family. *Brunonia* 2: 247-287.

ATTRIBUTION

Fact Sheet Prepared by P.J. de Lange (1 November 2009). Description based on Orchard (1979)

MORE INFORMATION

<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/myriophyllum-propinquum/>

PDF DATE

27 May 2026