

Pilosella officinarum

COMMON NAMES

hawkweed, mouse-ear hawkweed

BIOSTATUS

Exotic

CONSERVATION STATUS

Not applicable

CATEGORY

Vascular

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Herbs - Dicotyledonous composites

FLOWER COLOURS

Yellow

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Perennial herb with rosettes and stolons 5-10 cm tall. Leaves 2.5-5 by 0.6-1.5 cm, glaucescent green above with white felt-like underside. Single yellow flower head per rosette, outer flower rays with red stripe.

SIMILAR TAXA

Pilosella officinarum is distinguished from other species by its large solitary pale yellow capitula and the dense stellate pubescence on stolons and beneath leaves.

HABITAT

Terrestrial. A plant of lowland, montane and subalpine habitats. Grows in sites with low to moderate fertility but appears to prefer moderate fertility. Shrubland, tussockland, cliff, bluff, riverbed and herbfield communities.

GENUS

Pilosella

FAMILY

Asteraceae

AUTHORITY

Pilosella officinarum F.Schultz & Sch.Bip.

SYNONYMS

Hieracium pilosella L.

ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

FLOWERING

October, November, December, January, February

FRUITING

November - April - (May)

YEAR NATURALISED

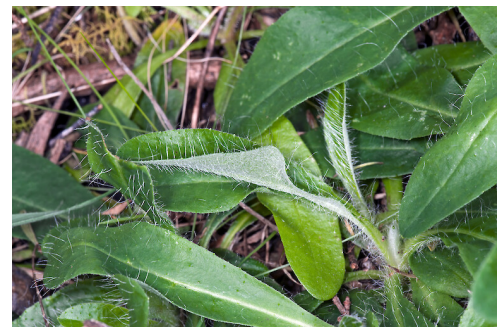
1878

ORIGIN

Europe, N. and C. Asia



Involucral bract detail, Mt Linton Station, Southland. Photographer: Jesse Bythell, Date taken: 19/02/2008, Licence: CC BY-NC.



Near Mangatoetoe Hut, Aorangi Forest Park. Photographer: Jeremy R. Rolfe, Date taken: 02/10/2010, Licence: CC BY.

REASON FOR INTRODUCTION

Accidental

TOLERANCES

The plant is tolerant of drought; intolerant of shade; highly tolerant of frost and slightly tolerant of poor drainage. Highly tolerant to physical damage and grazing. Requires low to medium soil fertility.

LIFE CYCLE AND DISPERSAL

Perennial. The hermaphrodite flowers are probably apomictic (produces viable seed without fertilisation) in New Zealand. Vegetative reproduction occurs through the production of rosettes by stolons (Timmins & MacKenzie 1995). Seed is prolifically produced at approximately 1000/dm squared but it is probable that no seed bank is formed (Timmins & MacKenzie 1995). Seed is dispersed by gravity and wind.

WETLAND PLANT INDICATOR STATUS RATING

FACU: Facultative Upland

Occasionally is a hydrophyte but usually occurs in uplands (non-wetlands).

ETYMOLOGY

pilosella: Softly hairy

NATIONAL PEST PLANT ACCORD SPECIES

This plant is listed in the 2020 National Pest Plant Accord. The National Pest Plant Accord (NPPA) is an agreement to prevent the sale and/or distribution of specified pest plants where either formal or casual horticultural trade is the most significant way of spreading the plant in New Zealand. For up to date information and an electronic copy of the 2020 Pest Plant Accord manual (including plant information and images) visit the [MPI website](#).

ENVIRONMENTAL WEED (2024)

This plant is named in a list of 386 environmental weeds in New Zealand 2024 prepared by DOC. 759 candidate species were considered for inclusion on this new comprehensive list of environmental weeds in New Zealand. The species considered were drawn from published lists of weed species, lists of plants that must be reported or managed by law if observed, existing national and regional programmes and agreements for pest management, and species already managed by the Department of Conservation (DOC). Candidate species were then assessed to see if they were fully naturalised and whether they have more than minor impacts in natural ecosystems. Read the full report [here](#).

NVS CODE

PILOFF

MORE INFORMATION

<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/pilosella-officinarum/>

PDF DATE

25 May 2026