

# Rumex acetosella

## COMMON NAMES

sheep's sorrel

## BIOSTATUS

Exotic

## CONSERVATION STATUS

Not applicable

## CATEGORY

Vascular

## STRUCTURAL CLASS

Herbs - Dicotyledons other than Composites

## FLOWER COLOURS

Red/Pink, White

## SIMILAR TAXA

Roots and rootstocks extensive but rather shallow. Stems 15 to 45 cm high, slender, upright, branched at top. Several stems may arise from 1 crown. Leaves are arrow-shaped, 2.5 to 7.5 cm long, thick, smooth, acid to the taste. Early growth consists of a rosette of basal leaves. Flowers borne on raceme near top of plant. Male and female flowers borne on different plants. (Wax, Fawcett and Isely 1981).

## GENUS

Rumex

## FAMILY

Polygonaceae

## AUTHORITY

Rumex acetosella L.

## ENDEMIC GENUS

No

## ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

## YEAR NATURALISED

1867

## ORIGIN

Europe

## LIFE CYCLE AND DISPERSAL

Seeds, 3-sided, reddish-brown, shiny. Hull reddish-brown, rough, often adhering to the seed. (Wax, Fawcett and Isely 1981).

## WETLAND PLANT INDICATOR STATUS RATING

FACU: Facultative Upland

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

## ETYMOLOGY

**rumex:** Sorrel

**acetosella:** From the Latin acetum 'vinegar' and the suffix -osum indicating an abundance of that noun, refers to the oxalic acid in Rumex acetosella



Rumex acetosella. Photographer: John Smith-Dodsworth, Licence: CC BY-NC.



Rumex acetosella. Photographer: John Smith-Dodsworth, Licence: CC BY-NC.

**NVS CODE**

RUMACE

**MORE INFORMATION**

<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/rumex-acetosella/>

**PDF DATE**

25 May 2026