

Ruppia polycarpa

COMMON NAME

Horses mane weed, lakeweed

SYNONYMS

None

FAMILY

Ruppiaceae

AUTHORITY

Ruppia polycarpa R.Mason

FLORA CATEGORY

Vascular – Native

ENDEMIC TAXON

No

ENDEMIC GENUS

No

ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Herbs - Monocots

CHROMOSOME NUMBER

2n = 18

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2017 | Not Threatened | Qualifiers: SO

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2012 | Not Threatened

2009 | Not Threatened

2004 | Not Threatened

DISTRIBUTION

Indigenous. North, South and Chatham Islands. Also in Australia

HABITAT

Saline ponds, lagoons, brackish streams, slow flowing fresh water streams and fresh water lakes from sea level to 700 m a.s.l.

WETLAND PLANT INDICATOR STATUS RATING

OBL: Obligate Wetland

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

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Rhizome prominent, and either much branched and congested giving rise to short stems and long leaves in dense grass-like mats or less closely branched with longer, sparsely branched stems. Leaves c.50–300 × 0.3–0.4 mm, dark green, almost filiform and only slightly flattened; apex obtuse, often most minutely denticulate; sheath (10–)25–35–50 mm long, auricles narrow. Peduncles to 0.5 m long, usually conspicuously thicker just below flowers, becoming spirally coiled as fruit matures. Flowers protandrous; carpels (5–)8(–16). Podogynes slender. Achenes (1.7–)2(–2.7) mm long, asymmetric, brown; mesocarp thin; endocarp smooth, black, with 2 longitudinal slits opposite to and about on level of top of operculum; beak 0.2–0.3 mm long.



Ruppia polycarpa (growth habit) - Chatham Islands, Rekohu (Chatham Island), Lake Te Wapu outlet, Kaiangaroa Beach. Photographer: Peter J. de Lange, Date taken: 29/01/2020, Licence: CC BY.



Ruppia polycarpa (inflorescence) Chatham Islands, Rekohu (Chatham Island), Lake Te Wapu outlet, Kaiangaroa Beach. Photographer: Peter J. de Lange, Date taken: 29/01/2020, Licence: CC BY.

SIMILAR TAXA

Ruppia polycarpa differs from *R. megacarpa* by its curved to straight rather than zig-zagged branching pattern, obtuse rather than bidentate leaf apices; carpels usually 4 per flower (rather than (5-)8(-16)), and fruits which are 4-5 mm long rather than < 3 mm long. *Stuckenia pectinata* which sometimes grows with both species of *Ruppia* is superficially similar. It is easily distinguished from both *Ruppia* species by the ligulate acute-tipped leaves, tuberous stems, and spicate inflorescences.

FLOWERING

October - February

FRUITING

October - May

PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

Uncertain. Probably easily grown in suitable conditions but *Ruppia* is unlikely to be widely cultivated (if at all). Most people regard it as a pest and are only interested in eradicating it.

ETYMOLOGY

ruppia: Named after Heinrich Bernhard Ruppius (1689-1719), an 18th century German botanist

WHERE TO BUY

Not commercially available

ATTRIBUTION

Fact sheet prepared for NZPCN by P.J. de Lange 2 March 2011. Description adapted from Moore & Edgar (1970).

REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

Moore, L.B.; Edgar, E. 1970: Flora of New Zealand Vol. II. Wellington, Government Printer.

NZPCN FACT SHEET CITATION

Please cite as: de Lange, P.J. (Year at time of access): *Ruppia polycarpa* Fact Sheet (content continuously updated). New Zealand Plant Conservation Network. <https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/ruppia-polycarpa/> (Date website was queried)

MORE INFORMATION

<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/ruppia-polycarpa/>