

# Senecio dunedinensis

## BIOSTATUS

Native – Endemic taxon

## CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2023 | Threatened – Nationally Endangered | Qualifiers: Sp, DPR, DPS, DPT, EF

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## CATEGORY

Vascular

## STRUCTURAL CLASS

Herbs - Dicotyledonous composites

## FLOWER COLOURS

Green, Yellow

## DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Erect, annual to short-lived, dark green to purple-green (almost brown-purple) perennial herb. **Mid-cauline leaves** 40–100 × 3–15 mm, dark green, purple-green to brown-purple, glabrescent on both surfaces when mature, sometimes sparsely white-lanate on upper surface, and moderately so on undersides, apetiolate, not amplexicaul, narrow-elliptic or narrowly elliptic-obovate to linear, usually remotely denticulate, sometimes entire, usually revolute, and without lobes at base. **Uppermost leaves** similar but smaller, usually linear and more distinct white-lanate (particularly on leaf undersides). **Supplementary bracts** 3–8, 1.2 mm long. **Involucral bracts** 12–13, glabrous to sparsely lanate, 4.5–5.5 mm long. **Ray florets** 0. **Disc** greenish yellow to dark yellow, 2–3 mm diameter, **Cypselae** 2.5 mm long, dark grey-black, subcylindric, narrowed to and slightly constricted below apex, usually with 2–3 rows of long hairs, these mostly on ribs, sometimes evenly hairy.

## SIMILAR TAXA

Rather similar to *S. quadridentatus* Labill. from which it differs by more stocky growth habit, wider, glabrescent, dark purple-green, brown-purple to dark green leaves, and shorter involucral bracts (4–5.5 cf. 5.5–9 mm). Hybrids (or at least plants intermediate between species) are frequent in some parts of the South Island, particularly in disturbed lowland to intermontane habitats. An unnamed entity allied to *Senecio dunedinensis* is also known. That entity differs by having more deeply toothed, sometimes lyrate-pinnatifid, brown-black to maroon-black leaves. It is more widespread than *S. dunedinensis* ranging from eastern Marlborough to the Ahuriri River mouth (Murray & de Lange 2013)

## DISTRIBUTION

Endemic. New Zealand: South Island (locally distributed in the east and south from the upper Wairau River to Southland).

## HABITAT

Lowland to subalpine (10–1300 m a.s.l.). Frequenting grey scrub where it grows in shaded sites under taller shrubs. Also often seen growing in shaded sites amongst boulders, or near or under rock overhangs. Sometimes it has been gathered from open grassland.

## THREATS

Never common with an apparently naturally sporadic distribution.



At Kyeburn. Photographer: John Barkla, Licence: CC BY.



Broken River. AK 10504. Photographer: Peter J de Lange, Licence: CC BY-NC.

## GENUS

Senecio

## FAMILY

Asteraceae

## AUTHORITY

Senecio dunedinensis Belcher

## SYNONYMS

Erechtites diversifolia Petrie, Erechtites quadridentata var. lanceola Kirk

## TAXONOMIC NOTES

*Senecio dunedinensis* is a poorly understood species which has been much confused with *S. quadridentatus* and which, as currently circumscribed, includes an allied possibly unnamed species (Murray & de Lange 2013). *Senecio dunedinensis* in the strict sense appears to be a very uncommon species found mostly around eastern and central Otago. Many herbarium records reported as this species are *S. quadridentatus* or the unnamed segregate.

## ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes

## ENDEMIC GENUS

No

## ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

## FLOWERING

November–February

## FRUITING

December–April

## PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

Easy from fresh seed, best treated as an annual. Prefers semi-shade.

## ETYMOLOGY

**senecio:** From the Latin senex 'old man' (probably referring to the bearded seeds)

## NVS CODE

SENDUN

## CHROMOSOME NUMBER

2n = 40

## PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2017 | Threatened – Nationally Endangered | Qualifiers: DP, EF, Sp

2012 | Threatened – Nationally Vulnerable | Qualifiers: DP, EF, Sp

2009 | At Risk – Naturally Uncommon | Qualifiers: EF

2004 | Sparse

[Jump to current conservation status](#)

## REGIONAL CONSERVATION STATUSES

Otago: 2025 | Regionally Threatened – Regionally Endangered | Qualifiers: DPS, DPT, NR, NStr, PF, RF, Sp, TL 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

Murray BG, de Lange PJ. 2013. Contributions to a chromosome atlas of the New Zealand flora – 40. Miscellaneous counts for 36 families. *New Zealand Journal of Botany* 51(1): 31–60. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0028825X.2012.747969>.  
Webb CJ, Sykes WR, Garnock-Jones PJ. 1988. Flora of New Zealand, Volume IV. Naturalised Pteridophytes, Gymnosperms, Dicotyledons. Botany Division, Department of Scientific and Industrial Research, Christchurch, NZ. 1365 p.

## ATTRIBUTION

Fact Sheet prepared for NZPCN by P.J. de Lange 1 November 2008. Description based on Webb et al. (1988). Some of this factsheet information is derived from [Flora of New Zealand Online](#) and is used under a [Creative Commons Attribution 3.0 New Zealand](#) licence.

## NZPCN FACT SHEET CITATION

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<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/senecio-dunedinensis/> (Date website was queried)

## MORE INFORMATION

<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/senecio-dunedinensis/>

## PDF DATE

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