

Senecio dunedinensis

SYNONYMS

Erechtites diversifolia Petrie, *Erechtites quadridentata* var. *lanceola* Kirk

FAMILY

Asteraceae

AUTHORITY

Senecio dunedinensis Belcher

FLORA CATEGORY

Vascular – Native

ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes

ENDEMIC GENUS

No

ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Herbs - Dicotyledonous composites

NVS CODE

SENDUN

CHROMOSOME NUMBER

2n = 40

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2018 | Threatened – Nationally Endangered

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

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

2009 | At Risk – Naturally Uncommon | Qualifiers: EF

2004 | Sparse

DISTRIBUTION

Endemic. South Island only, where 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.



Broken River. AK 10504. Photographer: Peter de Lange



Broken River. AK 10504. Photographer: Peter de Lange

FEATURES

Erect, annual to short-lived, dark green to purple-green (almost brown-purple) perennial herb. Mid cauline leaves 40-100 x 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, Cypsela 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)

FLOWERING

November - February

FLOWER COLOURS

Green, Yellow

FRUITING

December - April

PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

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

THREATS

Never common with an apparently naturally sporadic distribution.

ETYMOLOGY

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

Taxonomic Issues

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.

ATTRIBUTION

Fact Sheet prepared for NZPCN by P.J. de Lange 1 November 2008. Description based on Webb et al. (1988).

REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

Murray, B.G.; de Lange, P.J. 2013: Contributions to a chromosome atlas of the New Zealand flora – 40. Miscellaneous counts for 36 families. *New Zealand Journal of Botany* 51: 31–60.
Webb, C.J.; Sykes, W.R.; Garnock-Jones, P.J. 1988: Flora of New Zealand. Vol. IV. Botany Division, DSIR, Christchurch

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/>