

# Senecio quadridentatus

## COMMON NAME

cotton fireweed, white fireweed, pahokoraka

## SYNONYMS

*Erechtites quadridentata* (Labill.) DC.

## FAMILY

Asteraceae

## AUTHORITY

*Senecio quadridentatus* Labill.

## FLORA CATEGORY

Vascular – Native

## ENDEMIC TAXON

No

## ENDEMIC GENUS

No

## ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

## STRUCTURAL CLASS

Herbs - Dicotyledonous composites

## NVS CODE

SENQUA

## CHROMOSOME NUMBER

$2n = 40$

## CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2012 | Not Threatened

## PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2009 | Not Threatened

2004 | Not Threatened

## DISTRIBUTION

Indigenous. Three Kings, North, South, Stewart and Chatham Islands.

Present in Australia

## HABITAT

Throughout from coastal to subalpine habitats. Always in recently disturbed ground



Leaf base. Remutaka Rail Trail. Photographer: Jeremy Rolfe



Leaf base. Remutaka Rail Trail. Photographer: Jeremy Rolfe

## FEATURES

Short-lived, usually much branched, perennial herb up to 1 m tall. Stems erect, moderately to densely covered in appressed-cottony hairs. Mid stem leaves more or less evenly spaced and sized., linear to narrow linear, 80-220 mm long, length:width ratio (l:w) 15-40 (or 7-10 if lobes present), mostly entire, rarely dissected or lobed, sometimes coarsely dentate to lobate; segments remote 1-3 per side and mainly in proximal half, spreading, triangular, base attenuate or occasionally with small entire auricles, not amplexicaul; margin entire or with frequent minute denticulations, appearing entire due to revolute margin; upper surface hairs appressed-cobwebby becoming glabrescent; lower surface green or purple-green, moderately to densely woolly. Upper stem leaves similar; auricles more frequent. Unit Inflorescence usually of many capitula; total number of capitula per stem often 50-200; overtopping variable; mature lateral peduncles mostly 5-25 mm long. Calycular bracteoles of capitula 4-8, 1.0-3.0 mm long peduncle and margin of bracteoles cobwebby to woolly at anthesis, or glabrate; involucre 6.0-10.0 x 1.2-2.0 mm; involucral bracts 8-14, basally cobwebby or glabrate, with apex erect; stereomes (in dried material) more or less flat, green or partially purple, sometimes minutely black-tipped or purple in a zone 1 mm long below tip. Florets 18-50, c. 80% female; corolla-lobes triangular, not or hardly thickened apically; corolla of bisexual florets 6-9 mm long, 4-lobed; corolla-lobes of female florets 3, 0.1 mm long. Cypsela 2.2-3.5 mm long, subcylindric, narrow to and constricted below apex, usually with 2-3 rows of hairs in narrow grooves between broad ribs, sometimes glabrous.

## SIMILAR TAXA

*Senecio dunedinensis* Belcher is similar and could be confused. Generally it is a smaller less heavily branched plant, with much wider dark green to purple-green glabrescent leaves. The involucral bracts are 4-6 mm rather than 6-10 mm long. *Senecio quadridentatus* tends to grow at lower altitudes than *S. dunedinensis* but at times the two species are sympatric and some of the variation seen between both species may be due to hybridism.

## FLOWERING

October - March

## FLOWER COLOURS

Yellow

## FRUITING

December - May

## PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

Easy from fresh seed. The silvery white foliage can be quite attractive but this species is invasive. Prefers full sun.

## ETYMOLOGY

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

## WHERE TO BUY

Not commercially available.

## TAXONOMIC NOTES

Unpublished Molecular evidence (nrDNA ITS sequences) held by University of Auckland place this species as sister to *S. marotiri* and *S. dunedinensis*.

## ATTRIBUTION

Fact sheet prepared for NZPCN by P.J. de Lange (12 July 2005). Description based on Thompson (2004).

## REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

Thompson, I.R. 2004: Taxonomic studies of Australian *Senecio* (Asteraceae): 1. The disciform species. *Muelleria* 19: 101-214.

## NZPCN FACT SHEET CITATION

Please cite as: de Lange, P.J. (Year at time of access): *Senecio quadridentatus* Fact Sheet (content continuously updated). New Zealand Plant Conservation Network.

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

## MORE INFORMATION

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