

Tetrachondra hamiltonii

SYNONYMS

Tillaea hamiltonii Kirk nom. nud.

FAMILY

Tetrachondraceae

AUTHORITY

Tetrachondra hamiltonii Petrie ex Oliv.

FLORA CATEGORY

Vascular – Native

ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes

ENDEMIC GENUS

No

ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Herbs - Dicotyledons other than Composites

NVS CODE

TETHAM

CHROMOSOME NUMBER

2n = 72

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2018 | Threatened – Nationally Vulnerable

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2017 | Threatened – Nationally Vulnerable | Qualifiers: DP, Sp

2012 | Data Deficient | Qualifiers: Sp

2009 | At Risk – Declining | Qualifiers: DP, Sp

2004 | Serious Decline

DISTRIBUTION

Endemic to New Zealand. In the North Island only known from the NW corner of the Ruahine Ranges. In the South Island localised but widespread, with its main centre of distribution in Otago, western Southland, Fiordland, and Stewart Island.

HABITAT

A species of open, compact turf communities such as those developed along lake and tarn margins, flushes and seepages. Occasionally found in suitably open sites within forest.

WETLAND PLANT INDICATOR STATUS RATING

FACW: Facultative Wetland

Usually is a hydrophyte but occasionally found in uplands (non-wetlands).

FEATURES

Creeping perennial herb rooting at nodes forming diffuse to dense turf-like patches. Stems fleshy, distinctly angled, square in cross-section, dark striped. Leaves opposite, 2 x 2 mm, broadly ovate to obovate-oblong, bright green or mottled with red, fleshy, sparsely covered with indistinct circular oil glands, glabrescent (leaf margins often faintly ciliolate), shortly petiolate to sessile, bases decurrent with stem. Flowers solitary, off-white to greenish-white. Calyx-lobes minute, ovate-triangular, corolla lobes 4, obovate-oblong, pubescent. Stamens and styles 4. Fruit of 4 brown setulose nutlets. These broadly elliptic or obovate, (1-)1.1-1.4(-1.5) mm.



Tetrachondra hamiltonii. Photographer: John Barkla



Catlins.

SIMILAR TAXA

Without fruits this diminutive creeping herb could be easily confused with a diverse range of other unrelated turf-forming herbs, e.g., *Nertera* spp., *Crassula* spp., *Galium* spp. However, the distinctive 4-fruited setulose nutlets immediately distinguish it from these and other potential look alikes.

FLOWERING

Flowers may be found throughout the year

FLOWER COLOURS

Green, White

FRUITING

Fruits may be found throughout the year.

PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

Easily grown from the division of whole plants.

THREATS

A naturally uncommon species of open damp turf, seepages, and the marginal turf communities of lakes and tarns. Sometimes in open scrub or damp grassland. Indications are that in parts of its range it is declining, possibly as a consequence of taller, faster growing weeds spreading into the habitats it requires.

ETYMOLOGY

hamiltonii: Named after W. S. Hamilton (of Southland)

WHERE TO BUY

Not commercially available but plants are held by several Botanic Gardens and specialist growers. It is very easily grown but is not particularly attractive.

ATTRIBUTION

Fact Sheet prepared for NZPCN by P.J. de Lange 1 August 2003. Description based on Allan (1961).

REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

Allan H.H. 1961: *Flora of New Zealand. Vol. 1*. Wellington, Government Printer.

NZPCN FACT SHEET CITATION

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

MORE INFORMATION

<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/tetrachondra-hamiltonii/>