

# Utricularia australis

## COMMON NAME

Yellow bladderwort

## SYNONYMS

*Utricularia protrusa* Hook.f., *U. mairii* Cheeseman

## FAMILY

Lentibulariaceae

## AUTHORITY

*Utricularia australis* R.Br.

## FLORA CATEGORY

Vascular – Native

## ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes

## ENDEMIC GENUS

No

## ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

## STRUCTURAL CLASS

Dicotyledonous Herbs other than Composites

## CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2012 | Threatened – Nationally Critical | Qualifiers: RF, RR, SO

## PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2009 | Threatened – Nationally Endangered | Qualifiers: RR, SO

2004 | Gradual Decline

## DISTRIBUTION

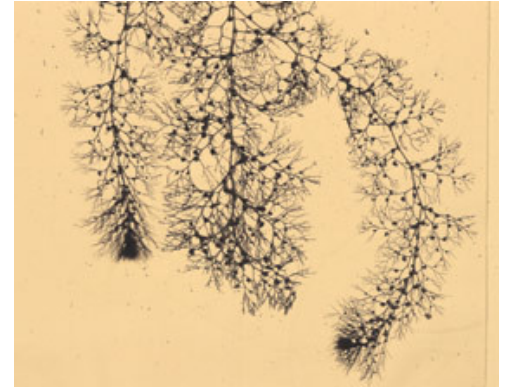
Indigenous. In New Zealand known only from the North Island, from Te Pahi to Lake Taupo, and near Paekakariki. Also present in Australia and Europe.

## HABITAT

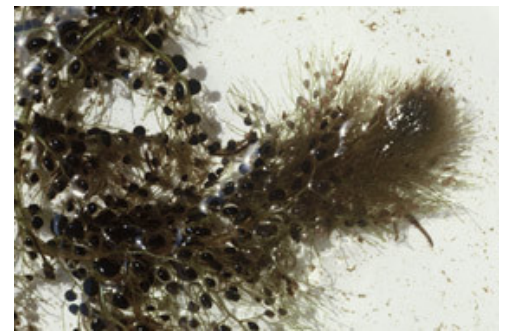
Coastal to lowland. Peat lakes, peaty pools and slow-moving streams draining peat bogs. Often found floating near or amongst spikerush (*Eleocharis sphacelata* R.Br.). *U. australis* appears to prefer shallow, still water, in sunny situations with little or no competition from other submerged aquatic plants.

## FEATURES

Wholly submerged, floating carnivorous aquatic plants dying down to turions (resting buds) in winter. Stems green to greenish-yellow, 400 mm or more long, filiform, sparingly branched. Leaves submerged, numerous, green to greenish-yellow, multifid 30-40 mm long, segments capillary up to 10 mm long. Bladders numerous and conspicuous, 1-4 mm long when mature, obliquely ovoid, mouth with 2 long setae, whole structure coloured dark blue to purple when mature and attached by short stalk near base of leaf segments. Inflorescence rarely seen, when present borne on a dark-green 2-4(-5)-flowered scape up to 170 mm long, this broad at base and tapering. Calyx lobes oblong to elliptic. Flowers dark yellow sometimes with a dark orange blotch on palate. Corolla upper lip 3-lobed, lower entire, 7-9 mm wide, broad, palate protruded; spur short, obtuse. Capsule 1.5-2 mm diameter, globose. Seeds not known in New Zealand.



Herbarium specimen, locality not specified.  
Photographer: Andrew Townsend



*Utricularia australis* close up of bladders and new growth, Opuatia Wetlands. Photographer: Peter de Lange

## SIMILAR TAXA

*Utricularia gibba* L. is an introduced species that has smaller, less divided floating stems and entire leaves. The upper lip of the corolla in this species is entire rather than 3-lobed as is seen in *U. australis*. *U. gibba* forms massive mats floating at the water surface and is usually always flowering while *U. australis* produces feathery, wholly submerged, floating stems and is very rarely found flowering. New Zealand examples of the naturalised *U. geminiscapa* Benj. differ from *U. australis* by their terminal leaves bearing small hairs, the internal portions of their bladders bearing quadrifid trichomes whose arms are in parallel, and by their cleistogamous flowering condition. *Utricularia australis* could be confused with the fully submerged, aquatic state of *Myriophyllum propinquum* A.Cunn., with which it sometimes grows. However, *Myriophyllum* can be readily distinguished from *U. australis* because it bears roots and the foliage lacks bladders

## FLOWERING

Flowers, December-March(-April), though some populations may never flower.

## FLOWER COLOURS

Orange, Yellow

## FRUITING

Seed has not yet been seen in New Zealand plants.

## PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

Difficult and should not be removed from the wild.

## THREATS

Now seriously at risk throughout most of its northern North Island range through competition from *Utricularia gibba* which occupies the same habitat and has a more aggressive growth form and also by other introduced aquatic weeds. It is also vulnerable to habitat loss through modification and drainage. There is some evidence which suggests it is selectively browsed by Canadian Geese and Black Swans

## ETYMOLOGY

**utricularia:** A small bladder

**australis:** Southern

## WHERE TO BUY

Not commercially available.

## ATTRIBUTION

Fact Sheet prepared by P.J. de Lange (1 November 2008). Description based on Salmon (2001), live and herbarium specimens - see also de Lange et al. (2010).

## REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

de Lange, P.J.; Heenan, P.B.; Norton, D.A.; Rolfe, J.R.; Sawyer, J.W.D. 2010: Threatened Plants of New Zealand. Canterbury University Press, Christchurch.

Salmon, B. 2001: Carnivorous plants of New Zealand. Ecosphere Publications, Manurewa.

## CITATION

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

## MORE INFORMATION

<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/utricularia-australis/>