

Plantago obconica

SYNONYMS

None

FAMILY

Plantaginaceae

AUTHORITY

Plantago obconica Sykes

FLORA CATEGORY

Vascular – Native

ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes

ENDEMIC GENUS

No

ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Herbs - Dicotyledons other than Composites

NVS CODE

PLAOBC

CHROMOSOME NUMBER

2n = 12

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2017 | At Risk – Naturally Uncommon | Qualifiers: DP, RR, Sp

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2012 | At Risk – Naturally Uncommon | Qualifiers: DP, RR, Sp

2009 | At Risk – Naturally Uncommon | Qualifiers: DP

2004 | Sparse

DISTRIBUTION

Endemic. New Zealand: South Island (Marlborough, Canterbury and Central Otago).

HABITAT

Subalpine to alpine (1500-1800 m. a.s.l.) where it grows in acidic bogs with other small herbs, often in areas subject to flooding, often for protracted periods.

WETLAND PLANT INDICATOR STATUS RATING

OBL: Obligate Wetland

Almost always is a hydrophyte, rarely in uplands (non-wetlands).



DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Small rosette-forming prostrate herb, presumably perennial. Primary root short-lived, dying to leave a circular root scar cavity 4-5 mm diameter, a circle of adventitious roots developing around the scar periphery. Stem very short, simple, with tuft of pale brown hairs 6-8 mm long. Leaves sessile, c.10.0-36.0 × 0.4-1.8 mm, subulate or linear-subulate, thick, with lower surface rounded and upper surface slightly concave, entire and glabrous or with scattered obtuse teeth which are often hairy, these hairs usually sparse except towards base. Flowers solitary on a short ± appressed hairy scape 1-8 mm long, elongating to c. 3-11 mm in fruit, almost hidden by long stem hairs. Bracts 2-4 mm long, broad ovate-elliptic, membranous except for herbaceous keel, glabrous. Calyx 3.5-5.0 × c.2.0 mm; segments + elliptic, membranous except for herbaceous keel, narrow, glabrous. Corolla 4-5 mm long, membranous; lobes 1.7-2.5 mm long, elliptic to ovate; often appearing lanceolate because of inrolled margins. Stamens 3-5 mm long; anthers apiculate. Ovary with 820 ovules; style 6-10 mm long, glandular-scaly, and rather densely hairy. Capsule 4.5-11.0 × 2.0-3.5 mm diameter across base of cap (across area of dehiscence), ± ellipsoid; basal part usually 3-9 mm long, obconic or funnelform, conspicuous and persistent; dehiscent cap 1.2-2.0 mm high, obversely campanulate. Seeds 5-11, including several aborted ones, normal ones 1.0-1.9 × 0.7-1.2 mm, ± ellipsoid or ovoid-ellipsoid but tending irregular, rather flattened.

SIMILAR TAXA

Allied to *P. triandra* Bergg. from which it differs by the very large, rather conspicuous, funnelform (obconic) capsule, smaller, finer subulate leaves, fewer seeds, and different chromosome number ($2n = 12$ cf. $2n = 48$ in *P. triandra*).

FLOWERING

January - March

FRUITING

February - May

PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

Unknown

THREATS

An apparently naturally uncommon, high elevation, biologically sparse species. However, because it is so small it is easily overlooked, and it is probably more widespread than is currently known. Further survey to ascertain an exact status is much desired.

ETYMOLOGY

plantago: Old Latin name for flat-leaved plants

obconica: Inverted cone

WHERE TO BUY

Not commercially available

ATTRIBUTION

Description based on Sykes (1988).

REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

Sykes, W.R. 1988: Notes on New Zealand *Plantago* species. *New Zealand Journal of Botany* 26: 321-323

MORE INFORMATION

<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/plantago-obconica/>