

# Oxalis exilis

## COMMON NAMES

creeping oxalis, yellow oxalis

## SYNONYMS

*Oxalis corniculata* var. *microphylla* Hook.f.; ?*Oxalis corniculata* var. *ciliifera* (Cunn.) Hook.f.

## FAMILY

Oxalidaceae

## AUTHORITY

*Oxalis exilis* A.Cunn.

## FLORA CATEGORY

Vascular – Native

## ENDEMIC TAXON

No

## ENDEMIC GENUS

No

## ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

## STRUCTURAL CLASS

Herbs - Dicotyledons other than Composites

## NVS CODE

OXAEXI

## CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2017 | Not Threatened | Qualifiers: SO

## PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2012 | Not Threatened

2009 | Not Threatened

2004 | Not Threatened

## DISTRIBUTION

Indigenous. Australia, New Zealand and probably the western Pacific. Naturalised in parts of Europe and the United Kingdom. In New Zealand present on the Three Kings, North, South, Stewart and Chatham Islands.

## HABITAT

Coastal to subalpine (up to 1100 m a.s.l.). However, mostly in lowland areas. Common in urban areas and in disturbed or successional indigenous habitats. Rarely in dense forest (though often colonising tracksides) and tussock grassland.

## WETLAND PLANT INDICATOR STATUS RATING

FAC: Facultative

Commonly occurs as either a hydrophyte or non-hydrophyte (non-wetlands).



*Oxalis exilis*. Photographer: John Barkla, Licence: CC BY.



Stokes Valley, Lower Hutt. Photographer: Jeremy R. Rolfe, Date taken: 17/04/2006, Licence: CC BY.

## DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Perennial herb without bulbils; taproot absent or weakly developed. Stems creeping or ascending up to 380 mm long, very sparsely antrorse-hairy. Leaves all cauline, tufted, 3-foliolate; leaflets sessile, 2.5-6.0 x 3.0-6.0 mm, mostly bright green, cuneate-obcordate, bilobed, glabrous above, pubescent below, margins ciliate, sinus cut to 1/3 leaflet length, lobes obovate, divergent, apices obtuse, 2-3 mm apart; petioles 10-90 mm long, with antrorse hairs; stipules to 2 mm long, conspicuous, with apex lobed or truncate, or inconspicuous with apex tapering abruptly to petiole, more or less ciliate. Inflorescences axillary, 1-2-flowered; peduncles at least as long as leaves, antrorse-hairy; pedicels erect, sometimes deflexed in fruit. Sepals oblong, 1.5-3.0 mm long, ciliate or glabrous; petals yellow, 4.5-9.0 mm long. Capsule 5.0-10.0 mm long, conical to cylindrical, usually moderately retrorse-hairy, often with scattered septate hairs; seeds 1.0-1.4 mm long, strongly transversely ribbed.

## SIMILAR TAXA

Rather variable but recognised by the widely creeping habit and lack of bulbils and obvious taproot; inconspicuous to conspicuous, lobed, truncate or tapering abruptly stipules up to 2 mm long; sparsely antrorse hairy stems; short and broad fruits (5.0-11 x 2-3 mm) with tapering apices that are clad in mostly simple (sometimes septate) hairs; and by the 1.0-1.4 mm long seeds which are strongly transversely ridged.

## FLOWERING

Throughout the year

## FLOWER COLOURS

Yellow

## FRUITING

Throughout the year

## PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

Easily grown and weedy. This species is usually present in gardens and is often the dominant or sole *Oxalis* present in lawns. It is unlikely that people would want to cultivate it.

## ETYMOLOGY

**oxalis:** From the Greek word oxus meaning acid or sharp

**exilis:** Thin

## WHERE TO BUY

Not commercially available.

## ATTRIBUTION

Fact sheet prepared for NZPCN by P.J. de Lange (1 November 2005). Description adapted from Webb et al. (1988). Some of this factsheet information is derived from [Flora of New Zealand Online](#) and is used under a [Creative Commons Attribution 3.0 New Zealand](#) licence.

## REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

Webb, C.J.; Sykes, W.R.; Garnock-Jones, P.J. 1988: Flora of New Zealand. Vol. IV. Naturalised Pteridophytes, Gymnosperms, Dicotyledons. Christchurch, New Zealand, Botany Division, D.S.I.R.

Wilcox, M.D. Creeping *Oxalis* carpets on Motuihe island. *Auckland Botanical Society Journal* 56: 19

## NZPCN FACT SHEET CITATION

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

## MORE INFORMATION

<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/oxalis-exilis/>

## PDF DATE

17 September 2024