

Ruppia megacarpa

COMMON NAMES

Horses mane weed, lakeweed

SYNONYMS

None

FAMILY

Ruppiaceae

AUTHORITY

Ruppia megacarpa R.Mason

FLORA CATEGORY

Vascular – Native

ENDEMIC TAXON

No

ENDEMIC GENUS

No

ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Herbs - Monocots

NVS CODE

RUPMEG

CHROMOSOME NUMBER

2n = 20

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2017 | At Risk – Naturally Uncommon | Qualifiers: RR, SO

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2012 | At Risk – Naturally Uncommon | Qualifiers: RR, SO

2009 | Not Threatened

2004 | Not Threatened

DISTRIBUTION

Indigenous. North, South and Chatham Islands. Present in Australia

HABITAT

Saline ponds, lagoons and slow flowing brackish streams. Predominantly coastal but occasionally extending inland

WETLAND PLANT INDICATOR STATUS RATING

OBL: Obligate Wetland

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

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Rhizome undistinguished; stems rather long usually with abundant zigzag branching. Leaves (40–)100–150(–200) × (0.2–)0.4–0.5(–0.7) mm, bright to olive green, almost filiform but broad-oblong in cross-section; apex bidentate, often most minutely denticulate; sheath (10–)15–25(–40) mm long, auriculate. Peduncles to 0.3 m long, usually reddish, scarcely thicker below flowers, becoming spirally coiled as fruit matures. Flowers protandrous; carpels 4, occasionally 5–6 in upper flower. Podogyne stout, tapering towards base. Achenes 40–45(–50) mm long, gibbous, olive-green, sometimes red-punctate; mesocarp thick; endocarp tuberculate, black, with 2 triangular apertures opposite to and about on level of top of operculum; beak c.1.3 mm long.



Ruppia megacarpa. Photographer: Rohan Wells, Licence: All rights reserved.



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SIMILAR TAXA

Ruppia polycarpa differs from *R. megacarpa* by its curved to straight rather than zig-zagged branching pattern, obtuse rather than bidentate leaf apices; carpels usually 4 per flower (rather than (5-)8(-16)), and fruits which are 4-5 mm long rather than < 3 mm long. *Stuckenia pectinata* which sometimes grows with both species of *Ruppia* is superficially similar. It is easily distinguished from both *Ruppia* species by the ligulate acute-tipped leaves, tuberous stems, and spicate inflorescences.

FLOWERING

October - February

FRUITING

November - April

PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

Uncertain. Probably easily grown in suitable conditions but *Ruppia* is unlikely to be widely cultivated (if at all). Most people regard it as a pest and are only interested in eradicating it.

ETYMOLOGY

ruppia: Named after Heinrich Bernhard Ruppian (1689-1719), an 18th century German botanist

WHERE TO BUY

Not commercially available

PLANT OF THE MONTH

This plant has been featured as a Plant of the Month – see [Trilepidea: NZPCN newsletter for April 2020](#) for the full story.

ATTRIBUTION

Fact sheet prepared for NZPCN by P.J. de Lange 2 March 2011. Description adapted from Moore & Edgar (1970). 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

Moore, L.B.; Edgar, E. 1970: *Flora of New Zealand* Vol. II. Wellington, Government Printer.

NZPCN FACT SHEET CITATION

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MORE INFORMATION

<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/ruppia-megacarpa/>

PDF DATE

17 September 2024