

Senecio hispidulus

COMMON NAME

fireweed

SYNONYMS

Erechtites hispidula (A.Rich.) DC.

FAMILY

Asteraceae

AUTHORITY

Senecio hispidulus A.Rich.

FLORA CATEGORY

Vascular – Native

ENDEMIC TAXON

No

ENDEMIC GENUS

No

ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Herbs - Dicotyledonous composites

NVS CODE

SENHIS

CHROMOSOME NUMBER

2n = 60

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2017 | Not Threatened | Qualifiers: SO

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2012 | Not Threatened

2009 | Not Threatened

2004 | Not Threatened

DISTRIBUTION

Indigenous. Three Kings, North, South, Stewart and Chatham Islands.

Present in Australia.

HABITAT

Coastal to montane. Widespread in disturbed habitats, especially in places recently burned or cleared of indigenous vegetation. Often found as a pasture weed, and can be common in urban areas. This species was regarded as scarce in the South Island during the 1800s. It is now common in the northern two-thirds of that island though still local in the west and it is still spreading south. It seems to be a recent arrival on the Chatham Islands.



Senecio hispidulus wild plant, Coromandel (March). Photographer: John Smith-Dodsworth, Licence: CC BY-NC.



Achenes. Stokes Valley, Lower Hutt. Photographer: Jeremy R. Rolfe, Date taken: 20/01/2007, Licence: CC BY.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Annual to short-lived perennial herb up to 2 m tall. Stems erect, sparsely to moderately coarse-hairy or glabrous near base, if hairy reducing to more or less glabrous above mid stem. Mid stem leaves more or less evenly spaced and sized, 70-150 mm long, dark green to yellow green, sometimes tinged with red, narrow-ovate to lanceolate, rarely narrow-elliptic or linear, length:width (l:w) ratio 2.5-6, usually coarse-dentate to sub-pinnatisect; segments 2-5 per side predominantly in proximal two-thirds, large divisions usually in proximal half, slightly antrorse, deltoid to narrow-deltoid or occasionally sub-oblong; base auriculate with auricles divided, semiamplexicaul; margins with scattered denticulations or teeth; both surfaces coarse hairy; lower surface dark green or purple, often with weakly cobwebby hairs overlaying coarse-hairs. Uppermost leaves narrow-lanceolate or linear, l:w 5-15 (excluding auricles), lobate or appearing undissected due to rolling of lamina, often widest at auricles. Unit Inflorescence usually of many capitula; total number of capitula per stem often 50-100; overtopping marked; mature lateral peduncles mostly 7-14 mm long. Calycular bracteoles of capitula 3-6, 1.0-2.5 mm long; peduncle and margin of bracteoles more or less glabrous at anthesis; involucre 4.5-6.0 x 1.4-1.8 mm, involucre bracts 9-13, glabrous, with erect apex; stereomes of dried material moderately convex, green with minutely blackened tip. Florets 18-35, pale yellow to yellow, c.70% female; corolla-lobes deltoid, thickened apically; corolla of bisexual florets 4.5-6.0 mm long, 5-lobed; corolla-lobes of female florets 4, 0.3-0.5 mm long. Cypsela 1.5-2.2 mm long, red-brown, narrow-obloid with fine papillose hairs in lines or narrow bands, l:w ratio of hairs 3. Pappus 4-6 mm long.

SIMILAR TAXA

Most frequently confused with the Acutely Threatened *Senecio scaberulus*. From that species it differs by its coarsely hispid, dark green rather than grey-green velutinous leaves, taller size (up to 2 m cf. 1 m in *S. scaberulus*) and by the cypsela which have hairs aligned longitudinally in the grooves rather than scattered over the entire surface. The hybrid *S. hispidulus* x *S. scaberulus* is common in some locations where *S. scaberulus* was formerly present.

FLOWERING

August - May

FLOWER COLOURS

Yellow

FRUITING

September - July

PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

Easily grown from fresh seed. very weedy and invasive.

ETYMOLOGY

senecio: From the Latin *senex* 'old man' (probably referring to the bearded seeds)

WHERE TO BUY

Not commercially available.

TAXONOMIC NOTES

In New Zealand two forms are present. One, represented by the oldest collections is distinctively covered in short, hispid hairs along the stems, the other is quite glabrous. The glabrous form first appeared in Northland during the late 1800s. Both forms merge in Australia.

ATTRIBUTION

Fact sheet prepared for NZPCN by P.J. de Lange (12 July 2005). Description based on Thompson (2004).

REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

Thompson, I.R. 2004: Taxonomic studies of Australian *Senecio* (Asteraceae): 1. The disciform species. *Muelleria* 19: 101-214

NZPCN FACT SHEET CITATION

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

MORE INFORMATION

<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/senecio-hispidulus/>