

Ranunculus trichophyllus

COMMON NAME

water buttercup

SYNONYMS

R. fluitans Lam was applied to this plant in NZ. However *R. fluitans* has longer leaves and often larger flowers (Johnson and Brooke 1989).

FAMILY

Ranunculaceae

AUTHORITY

Ranunculus trichophyllus Chaix

FLORA CATEGORY

Vascular – Exotic

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Herbs - Dicotyledons other than Composites

NVS CODE

RANTRI

CONSERVATION STATUS

Not applicable

BRIEF DESCRIPTION

Submerged perennial plant with creeping rhizomes and long leafy stems. The leaves are usually 3 to 6 cm long, forked and ending in threadlike segments. The white 5-petalled flowers with a yellow centre are held above the water surface.

DISTRIBUTION

Widely naturalised, common in many regions but apparently absent in Northland and very rare in Westland. Becoming rare in northern New Zealand south to the volcanic plateau where it is still common.

HABITAT

Moderately fast flowing to still water bodies.

WETLAND PLANT INDICATOR STATUS RATING

OBL: Obligate Wetland

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

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Aquatic perennial, rarely terrestrial; roots all fibrous. Rhizome creeping. Stems slender to stout, prostrate or ascending, up to 1-(2)m long often rooting at the nodes. Lvs divided into many filiform segments, glabrous but for a few short hairs at segment tips, (1)-3-6-(8) cm long; segments narrowly linear in terrestrial plants; petiole (2)-5-30 mm long. Fls solitary, 8-15 mm diam. Pedicels terete, glabrous, (2)-3-6-(8) cm long. Sepals 5, bluish near tip, reflexed 2.5-4 mm long. Petals 5, white with yellow base, 6-8 x c. 4mm long; nectary single, 0.5-1mm from petal base, lunate. Receptacle usually with a few sparse hairs at base, elongating slightly at fruiting. Achenes 30-60, glabrous, ovoid, slightly flattened, transversely rugose; body 1.5-2 mm long; beak straight, c. 0.5 mm long.



Eastern Wairarapa. Photographer: Jeremy R. Rolfe, Date taken: 15/02/2009, Licence: CC BY.



Eastern Wairarapa. Photographer: Jeremy R. Rolfe, Date taken: 15/02/2009, Licence: CC BY.

SIMILAR TAXA

Fanwort (*Cabomba caroliniana*) and egeria (*Egeria densa*) have similar flowers. Differs from fanwort in that the leaves are not fan-shaped and alternately rather than oppositely arranged. Differs from egeria in that the leaves are finely divided, forked and not arranged in whorls.

FLOWERING

(October) December - February (April)

FLOWER COLOURS

White, Yellow

FRUITING

(Oct)-Dec-Feb-(Apr)

LIFE CYCLE

Spreads by seeds or stem fragments. Bird dispersed seed.

YEAR NATURALISED

1906

ORIGIN

Temperate Northern Hemisphere and Australia

REASON FOR INTRODUCTION

Possibly naturally introduced from Australia by water fowl. Not known from the international aquarium or pond trade (Kasselman 2003).

CONTROL TECHNIQUES

Not usually controlled in New Zealand, but may be controlled manually, or mechanically.

ETYMOLOGY

ranunculus: From the Latin 'rana' frog, meaning little frog and probably refers to the plants typical marshy habit where frogs abound

ATTRIBUTION

Factsheet prepared by Paul Champion and Deborah Hofstra (NIWA). Features description from Webb et al. (1988).

REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

Webb, C.J.; Sykes, W.R.; Garnock-Jones, P.J. (1988). Flora of New Zealand Volume 4: Naturalised pteridophytes, gymnosperms, dicotyledons. Botany Division, DSIR, Christchurch. 1365 pp.

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Johnson PN, Brooke PA (1989). Wetland plants in New Zealand. DSIR Field Guide, DSIR Publishing, Wellington. 319pp.

Coffey BT, Clayton JS (1988). New Zealand water plants: a guide to plants found in New Zealand freshwaters. Ruakura Agricultural Centre. 65pp.

Popay et al (2010). An illustrated guide to common weeds of New Zealand, third edition. NZ Plant Protection Society Inc, 416pp. Kasselman, K. (2003). Aquarium plants. Kreiger Publishing, Florida. 518 pp

MORE INFORMATION

<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/ranunculus-trichophyllus/>