

# Plantago australis

## COMMON NAMES

swamp plantain

## BIOSTATUS

Exotic

## CATEGORY

Vascular

## STRUCTURAL CLASS

Herbs - Dicotyledons other than Composites

## SIMPLIFIED DESCRIPTION

Sparsely hairy herb with lance-shaped leaves lying close to the ground arising from a central point (like a dandelion), up to 30 cm long and 8 cm wide, with parallel veins, flower in centre of leaves, an up to 60 cm tall stem with a cylindrical flowerhead more than 10 cm long at the top, consisting of many small brown flowers.

## FLOWER COLOURS

Brown, White

## DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Hairy perennial herb with short stout caudex and numerous adventitious roots. Lvs all radical, few to many in the rosette; petiole usually 1-20 cm long, often purple, sometimes very short and ill-defined with woolly tuft at base. Lamina c. 2.5-30 × 7-8 cm, lanceolate, or obovate to broad-elliptic, hairy, especially beneath on the raised 5 or 7 main veins, entire or remotely dentate; base attenuate; apex obtuse. Scape c. 5-60 cm long, ± terete, densely hairy in upper part. Spike generally > 10 cm long at maturity, narrow-cylindric. Bracts usually slightly < sepals, ciliate, otherwise very similar to sepals. Sepals 2-3 mm long, broad-ovate, scarious except for central green or purple band, usually glabrous except for ciliate keel. Corolla tube = calyx; lobes 2.5-3 mm long, ovate, mostly soon curling involutely and forming a prominent, acute, erect, cone. Stamens glabrous, usually with small anthers and included (cleistogamous fls), sometimes with large, long-exserted anthers (chasmogamous fls). Style hairy, > corolla. Capsule 2.5-3.5 mm long, ovoid or ellipsoid-ovoid, 3-seeded. Seeds 1.8-2.2 mm long, ovoid-ellipsoid or oblong, generally deep olive green, sometimes brownish green or almost black (Webb et al., 1988).

## SIMILAR TAXA

Most similar to broad-leaved plantain (*P. major*) which has much broader (up to 16 cm across) hairless leaves and narrow-leaved plantain (*P. lanceolata*) that is also hairless and has a much shorter flower head with a ribbed stalk.

## DISTRIBUTION

Scattered throughout both islands, rare in the East.

## HABITAT

Wetlands, water body and wetland margins, wet pasture, also occasional in dry sandy areas.

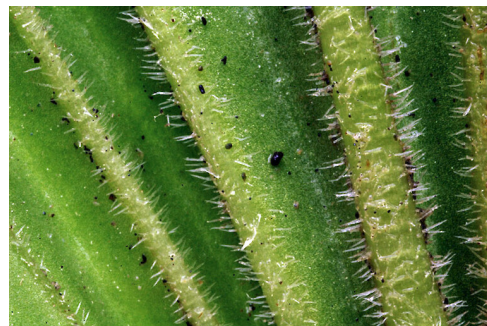
## CONSERVATION STATUS

Not applicable

## DETAILED TAXONOMY



Coal Island, Fiordland. Photographer: John Barkla, Licence: CC BY.



Lower surface of mature leaf. Kai-iwi sea cliff. Aug 2010. Photographer: Colin C. Ogle, Licence: CC BY-NC.

## FAMILY

Plantaginaceae

## AUTHORITY

*Plantago australis* Lam.

## ECOLOGY

## FLOWERING

November to January

## FRUITING

Autumn

## YEAR NATURALISED

1883

## ORIGIN

Southern North America, Central and South America

## REASON FOR INTRODUCTION

Unknown, seed or soil contaminant.

## CONTROL TECHNIQUES

Not controlled in New Zealand.

## LIFE CYCLE AND DISPERSAL

Seed dispersed by water, animals or contaminated machinery.

## WETLAND PLANT INDICATOR STATUS RATING

FAC: Facultative

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

## OTHER INFORMATION

## ETYMOLOGY

**plantago**: Old Latin name for flat-leaved plants

**australis**: Southern

## NVS CODE

PLAAUS

## REFERENCING AND CITATIONS

### 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.

Popay et al (2010). An illustrated guide to common weeds of New Zealand, third edition. NZ Plant Protection Society Inc, 416pp.

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

## ATTRIBUTION

Prepared by Paul Champion and Deborah Hofstra (NIWA).

## MORE INFORMATION

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

## PDF DATE

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