

Hedera helix

COMMON NAME

ivy

SYNONYMS

Hedera helix L. subsp. *helix*

FAMILY

Araliaceae

AUTHORITY

Hedera helix L.

FLORA CATEGORY

Vascular – Exotic

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Lianes & Related Trailing Plants - Dicotyledons

CONSERVATION STATUS

Not applicable

HABITAT

Terrestrial. Forest understorey, shrubland, rocky cliffs, open areas where there is some support for its scrambling habit.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Perennial climber with stems woody, stout, becoming erect at flowering, attaching to support with aerial rootlets. Leaves alternate, hairless, dark green or variegated ivory-white, variable shaped (usually shallowly lobed), 3-15 cm long (leaves on flowering stems usually not lobed). Flowers tiny, insignificant, yellowish-green, Mar-May. Berries 5-8 mm diam, purple to black, usually with low viability.

SIMILAR TAXA

Not generally confused, but identifying to subspecies can be problematic, many different cultivars exist. Other Ivy species are easily separated. Boston ivy (*Parthenocissus tricuspidata*) is deciduous and foliage is often dark red. German ivy (*Senecio mikanioides*) has thin leaves and yellow flowers in the winter. Cape ivy (*Senecio angulatus*) has thick fleshy leaves and yellow flowers. Fragrant ivy (*Hedera colchica*) is sometimes cultivated, this species is very similar to *H. helix*, but young shoots are always green, and the leaves are often very large and fragrant when crushed.

FLOWERING

March, April, May

FLOWER COLOURS

Green, Yellow

FRUITING

August, September, October, November, December



Hedera helix subsp. *helix*. Photographer: Peter J. de Lange, Licence: CC BY-NC.



Street edge, Virginia Heights, Whanganui. Photographer: Colin C. Ogle, Date taken: 23/04/2017, Licence: CC BY-NC.

LIFE CYCLE

Perennial, long-lived and persists over time. Heteroblastic, with the lobed leaves and self-clinging stems juvenile. Adult foliage is usually produced in full sun and the leaves are more orbicular in shape and flowers and fruit are produced. Reproduces from seed. Ground trailing stems may also take root and a single node is capable of growing. Fruit is produced prolifically on mature stems. It is unclear at this stage whether subsp. canariensis produces fruit in NZ. Each fruit contains a 2-3 seeds. Fruit and seed dispersed by birds. also can spread extensively vegetatively, rooted stems can re-sprout after disturbance.

YEAR NATURALISED

1873

ORIGIN

temp. Europe, Asia

REASON FOR INTRODUCTION

Ornamental.

TOLERANCES

Tolerant to deep shade, severe frosts and high to low moisture.

ETYMOLOGY

hedera: From the ancient Latin name for ivy.

MORE INFORMATION

<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/hedera-helix/>