

# Ranunculus sceleratus

## COMMON NAME

celery-leaved buttercup

## FAMILY

Ranunculaceae

## AUTHORITY

Ranunculus sceleratus L.

## FLORA CATEGORY

Vascular – Exotic

## STRUCTURAL CLASS

Herbs - Dicotyledons other than Composites

## NVS CODE

RANSCE

## CONSERVATION STATUS

Not applicable

## BRIEF DESCRIPTION

Fleshy, shiny-leaved buttercup, superficially looking like a young celery plant, but with small (0.5 to 1 cm diameter) 5-petalled pale yellow flowers and a cylindrical green fruit on a many branched flowerhead on the top of upright leafy stem (up to 60 cm tall).

## DISTRIBUTION

Scattered throughout both islands.

## HABITAT

Grows in wet places such as in ditches, along streams and around ponds and lakes (Landcare Research 1999).

## WETLAND PLANT INDICATOR STATUS RATING

OBL: Obligate Wetland

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

## DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Annual; roots all fibrous. Stems stout, erect, glabrous or with sparse appressed hairs, (0.10-)0.30-0.60(-0.75) m tall. Basal and lower cauline lvs broadly ovate to reniform, cordate, deeply 3(-5)-lobed, glabrous or with fine appressed hairs, (10-)30-50(-80) × (15-)40-60(-100) mm; lobes obovate-cuneate, again shallowly 3-lobed and with crenate margins; petioles glabrous, (20-)50-100(-300) mm long. Upper cauline lvs similar; lobes becoming lanceolate, entire; uppermost lvs sessile, not lobed, becoming finely appressed-hairy. Fls usually > 30 per stem, 6-10 mm diam. Pedicels erect, numerous, with sparse, fine hairs, sulcate, 25-40(-60) mm long at fruiting. Sepals 5, hairy, deflexed, acute, 3-4 mm long. Petals 5, pale yellow, broadly obovate, 3.0-4.0 × 2.5 mm; nectary single, 0.5 mm from petal base, pocket-like. Receptacle elongated, cylindrical, hairy. Achenes (100-)200-400(-1000), in cylindrical heads, glabrous, hardly flattened, weakly keeled, obovoid, weakly rugulose; body c.1.0 × 0.8 mm; beak < 0.5 mm long

## SIMILAR TAXA

Differs from other buttercups by the combination of glabrous deeply 3 to 5 lobed leaves, upright not creeping growth habit, deflexed sepals and cylindrical rather than globose receptacle.

## FLOWERING

Spring to autumn

## FLOWER COLOURS

Yellow



Ranunculus sclereratus. Photographer: John Barkla, Licence: CC BY.



Ranunculus sceleratus. Photographer: John Barkla, Licence: CC BY.

## FRUITING

Spring to autumn

## LIFE CYCLE

Seed dispersed by water, animals or contaminated machinery.

## YEAR NATURALISED

1878

## ORIGIN

Europe, South, West and Central Asia, Northern and tropical Africa

## REASON FOR INTRODUCTION

Unknown, seed or soil contaminant

## CONTROL TECHNIQUES

Can be controlled manually, mechanically or herbicidally depending on situation.

## ETYMOLOGY

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

## POISONOUS PLANT

Resembles celery so sometimes mistakenly eaten. One of the most toxic buttercup species with the divided leaves causing blistering of the mouth and lips.

## ATTRIBUTION

Factsheet prepared by Paul Champion and Deborah Hofstra (NIWA).

## 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.

Healy, A.J. (1982). Identification of weeds and clovers. New Zealand Weed and Pest Control Society Publication. Editorial Services Limited, Featherston. 299pp.

## MORE INFORMATION

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