

Epilobium confertifolium

COMMON NAME

willowherb

SYNONYMS

Epilobium findlayi Allan, *Epilobium dawbinii* Allan

FAMILY

Onagraceae

AUTHORITY

Epilobium confertifolium Hook.f.

FLORA CATEGORY

Vascular – Native

ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes

ENDEMIC GENUS

No

ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Herbs - Dicotyledons other than Composites

CHROMOSOME NUMBER

2n = 36

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2017 | At Risk – Naturally Uncommon | Qualifiers: RR, Sp

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2012 | At Risk – Naturally Uncommon | Qualifiers: RR, Sp

2009 | At Risk – Naturally Uncommon

2004 | Range Restricted

DISTRIBUTION

Endemic. Auckland Islands and Campbell Island/Motu Ihupuku.

HABITAT

Sea level to 600 m a.s.l. A species of open ground amongst *Poa litorosa* and *Chionochoa antarctica* tussocks or in exposed rock ground and turf.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Compact, creeping, matted, mostly glabrous perennial herb. **Stems** 20–180 mm long, creeping and rooting at nodes or semi-erect to erect, glabrous except for lines of fine appressed or erect hairs decurrent from the petiole margins. **Leaves** arranged parallel to ground in creeping forms, longer than internodes, mostly opposite becoming alternate in the inflorescence; subsessile to shortly petiolate (up to 2 mm long); lamina 4–16 × 2–7 mm, glossy, bright green, elliptic, apex acute, base attenuate, margins serrulate bearing up to 12 teeth, lateral veins scarcely evident, 1–4 either side of midrib. **Inflorescence and flowers** erect with flowers well spaced along stems. **Ovaries** 5–12 mm long, glabrous, subsessile or on glabrous or finely strigulose-striated pedicels up to 8 mm long. **Floral tube** 0.4–1.0 × 0.7–1.4 mm, glabrous. **Sepals** 1.8–3.3 × 0.7–1.1 mm, glabrous, not keeled. **Petals** 2.0–5.5 × 1.2–2.6 mm, bright rose-purple, notch 0.3–1.3 mm. **Anthers** 0.3–0.5 × 0.3–0.4 mm, yellow; filaments of longer stamens 0.8–1.5 mm long, those of shorter 0.5–0.6 mm, rose-purple. **Style** 0.8–1.8 mm tall, white; stigma 0.6–1.3 × 0.3–0.8 mm, white, clavate. **Capsule** 13–40 mm long on pedicel up to 60 mm long; thick and fleshy, bright green, glabrous. **Seeds** 0.8–0.9 × 0.4 mm, brown, narrowly obovoid, papillose; coma 5–7 mm long, white, easily detached.



Enderby Island. Photographer: Jane Gosden, Licence: CC BY-NC-SA.



Enderby Island. Photographer: Jane Gosden, Licence: CC BY-NC-SA.

SIMILAR TAXA

A distinctive species easily recognised by the glabrous ovary and rose-pink flowers. It has no close relationship morphologically or otherwise to the other *Epilobium* species recorded from the Subantarctic islands

FLOWERING

November–January

FLOWER COLOURS

Red/Pink, Violet/Purple

FRUITING

December–March

LIFE CYCLE

Minute pappate seeds are wind dispersed (Thorsen et al., 2009).

PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

Difficult. Should not be removed from the wild.

THREATS

Not threatened. A narrow range endemic abundant within its subantarctic habitats and listed only because it qualifies as a Range Restricted species.

ETYMOLOGY

epilobium: From the Greek epi- 'upon' and lobos 'a pod', the flowers appearing to be growing on the seed pod.

WHERE TO BUY

Not commercially available.

ATTRIBUTION

Fact sheet prepared for NZPCN by P.J. de Lange 6 January 2008. Description adapted from Raven & Raven (1976) and Webb & Simpson (2001).

REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

Raven PH, Raven TE. 1976. The genus *Epilobium* in Australasia. *New Zealand DSIR Bulletin 216*. Government Printer, Wellington, NZ. 321 p.

Thorsen MJ, Dickinson KJM, Seddon PJ. 2009. Seed dispersal systems in the New Zealand flora. *Perspectives in Plant Ecology, Evolution and Systematics 11*: 285–309.

Webb CJ, Simpson MJA. 2001. *Seeds of New Zealand Gymnosperms and Dicotyledons*. Manuka Press, Christchurch. 428 p.

NZPCN FACT SHEET CITATION

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<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/epilobium-confertifolium/> (Date website was queried)

MORE INFORMATION

<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/epilobium-confertifolium/>