

Epilobium rotundifolium

COMMON NAME

round-leaved willowherb

FAMILY

Onagraceae

AUTHORITY

Epilobium rotundifolium G.Forst.

FLORA CATEGORY

Vascular – Native

ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes

ENDEMIC GENUS

No

ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Herbs - Dicotyledons other than Composites

NVS CODE

EPIROT

CHROMOSOME NUMBER

2n = 36

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2017 | Not Threatened

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2012 | Not Threatened

2009 | Not Threatened

2004 | Not Threatened

DISTRIBUTION

Endemic. New Zealand: North, South, Stewart and Chatham Islands. Naturalised in Tasmania and the United Kingdom

HABITAT

Coastal to subalpine. Frequenting open forest, shrubland and grassland where it usually grows in partial shade on moist stream side banks, rocks within streams and rivers, or on damp banks, amongst boulders and within seepages in forest. *Epilobium rotundifolium* is also one of several indigenous epilobia that have successfully established within urban environments.



Oakleigh Creek Falls, Unitec, 25 March.
Photographer: Mike Wilcox, Licence: All rights reserved.



Coromandel. October. Photographer: John Smith-Dodsworth, Licence: CC BY-NC.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Widely creeping, much-branched from base, perennial herb. Stems 100-400 mm tall, initially procumbent soon becoming ascendent and then erect, surfaces strigulose all round but especially so in lines decurrent from the margins of the petioles, often also with a few glandular hairs. Leaves opposite, a few of the uppermost alternate, the lateral veins inconspicuous, 2-5 on each side of the midrib; lamina 3-25 × 3-20 mm, adaxially green to coppery, dull or somewhat glossy, abaxially pinkish or flushed wine-red, broadly to very broadly ovate, acute to rounded at the apex, obtuse to truncate at the base, margins serrate with 5-14 teeth on each side, petiolate, petiole 1-8 mm long. Inflorescence nodding. Flowers erect. Pedicellate, pedicels 2-12 mm long. Ovaries 8-20 mm long, pubescent, investiture comprised of erect glandular hairs. Floral tube 0.5-1.5 × 0.9-2.0 mm. Sepals 2.0-3.4 × 0.7-1.2 mm, not keeled, subglabrous. Petals 2.5-5.0 × 1.5-3.5 mm, the notch 0.5-0.9 mm deep, white. Stamen filaments white of two types: long (1.2-2.7 mm long) and short (0.7-1.1 mm long), Anthers 0.7-0.8 × 0.6-0.7 mm, yellow. Style 1.4-2.7 mm long, white; stigma 1.0-1.5 × 0.7-0.8 mm, white, clavate surrounded by the anthers at anthesis. Capsule 20-50 mm long, subglabrous to strigulose, on a pedicel 15-42 mm long. Seeds 0.6-0.9 mm long, orange-brown, obovate-elliptic to obovate, finely reticulate-mammillate; coma 4-7 mm long, white to pale brown, caducous.

SIMILAR TAXA

Epilobium rotundifolium is easily distinguished from other *epilobia* by the sprawling growth habit with stems much branched from the base; by the broadly to very broadly ovate serrate often copper-coloured leaves with pinkish to wine-red undersides; nodding inflorescence; evenly pubescent ovaries that are clad in short, erect glandular hairs; sepals which are 2.0-3.4 × 0.7-1.2 mm and not keeled; and by the 0.6-0.9 mm long, orange-brown seeds

FLOWERING

September - May

FRUITING

October - July

LIFE CYCLE

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

PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

Very easily grown from rooted pieces and fresh seed but inclined to become weedy.

ETYMOLOGY

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

rotundifolium: Round leaved

WHERE TO BUY

Not commercially available.

ATTRIBUTION

Fact sheet prepared for NZPCN by P.J. de Lange 30 August 2011. Description adapted from Raven & Raven (1976) and Webb & Simpson (2001).

REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

Raven, P.H.; Raven, T.E. 1976: The genus *Epilobium* in Australasia. New Zealand DSIR Bulletin 216. Wellington, Government Printer.

Thorsen, M. J.; Dickinson, K. J. M.; Seddon, P. J. 2009. Seed dispersal systems in the New Zealand flora. *Perspectives in Plant Ecology, Evolution and Systematics* 11: 285-309

Webb, C.J.; Simpson, M.J.A. 2011: *Seeds of New Zealand Gymnosperms and Dicotyledons*. Christchurch, Manuka Press.

NZPCN FACT SHEET CITATION

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

MORE INFORMATION

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