

Epilobium vernicosum

SYNONYMS

Included by Raven & Raven (1976) within a broad circumscription of *Epilobium glabellum* G.Forst.

FAMILY

Onagraceae

AUTHORITY

Epilobium vernicosum Cheeseman

FLORA CATEGORY

Vascular – Native

ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes

ENDEMIC GENUS

No

ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Herbs - Dicotyledons other than Composites

NVS CODE

EPIVER

CHROMOSOME NUMBER

2n = 36

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2017 | At Risk – Naturally Uncommon | Qualifiers: RR

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2012 | At Risk – Naturally Uncommon | Qualifiers: RR

2009 | At Risk – Naturally Uncommon

2004 | Data Deficient

DISTRIBUTION

Endemic to the western side of the South Island of New Zealand where it is known only from North West Nelson to South Westland.

HABITAT

Montane to subalpine screes and rock outcrops.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Stout herb with woody base. Branches up to 20 cm long, reddish-green, numerous, decumbent at base, then ascending, erect at tips. Leaves (6-)15(-20) × (3-)8-10 mm, narrow-oblong to ovate-oblong, margins obscurely toothed, very glossy, dark green, often reddish. Flowers pink 12-20 mm diameter, with the broad petals deeply lobed. Capsules hairless, 15-25 mm long. Seeds brown 0.8-1.4 mm.

SIMILAR TAXA

This species is closely allied to *E. glabellum* - with which it was placed by Raven & Raven (1976). It differs from that species and those allied to it by its ecological preference for base-rich rocks (e.g., limestone, marble), its decumbent habit, very glossy leaves, and much larger, pale pink, deeply lobed flowers.



Epilobium vernicosum at the Needle.
Photographer: Sandra Wotherspoon, Licence: CC BY-NC.



Mudd Mountain, Matiri Plateau. Photographer: Sandra Wotherspoon, Licence: CC BY-NC.

FLOWERING

December - February

FLOWER COLOURS

Red/Pink, White

FRUITING

January - April

LIFE CYCLE

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

PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

Easily grown from seed and rooted pieces of stem.

THREATS

Always considered uncommon (Allan 1961). Although it would seem unlikely to be seriously threatened the exact status of this species throughout its range is uncertain, a situation exacerbated because it is treated by Raven & Raven (1976) and Webb et al. (1988: Flora 4) as part of the range of variation exhibited by the very common *E. glabellum*. This has meant that most recent field surveys have not specifically recognised it.

ETYMOLOGY

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

vernicosum: Polished

ATTRIBUTION

Fact sheet prepared by P.J. de Lange for NZPCN (1 June 2013)

REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

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

NZPCN FACT SHEET CITATION

Please cite as: de Lange, P.J. (Year at time of access): *Epilobium vernicosum* Fact Sheet (content continuously updated). New Zealand Plant Conservation Network.

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

MORE INFORMATION

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