

Lepidium desvauxii

COMMON NAME

bushy peppergrass, narrow-leaved cress

SYNONYMS

None

FAMILY

Brassicaceae

AUTHORITY

Lepidium desvauxii Thell.

FLORA CATEGORY

Vascular – Native

ENDEMIC TAXON

No

ENDEMIC GENUS

No

ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Herbs - Dicotyledons other than Composites

NVS CODE

LEPDES

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2017 | Not Threatened | Qualifiers: SO

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2012 | Not Threatened

2009 | Not Threatened | Qualifiers: SO

2004 | Data Deficient

DISTRIBUTION

Uncertain. Some populations may be indigenous while others are almost certainly introduced. Definitely indigenous to Australia. In New Zealand known from one site in the North Island (Motuihe Island), and throughout the South, Stewart and main Chatham Islands.

HABITAT

A pepper-cress of primarily coastal habitats where it may grow in turf, on cliff faces, in sand, along stream banks or boulder field. It has also been collected as a roadside weed well inland in parts of the South Island.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Perennial herb with stout, woody tap root. All parts smell strongly of cress when bruised. Stems erect to decumbent 20–45 cm tall, branches leaf-opposed, spreading, ridged, usually covered in short, back-ward pointing hairs. Basal leaves withering at fruiting, narrow oblanceolate, pinnate, 6–12 × 1.5–2.5 cm, hairless or sparsely bristly, margins with triangular or 2-lobed teeth, pinnae 5–8 pairs, toothed, especially toward apices. Stem leaves becoming simple, bristly, margins with small triangular or 2-lobed teeth, middle leaves narrow-oblanceolate, toothed 1.5–3 × 0.5–1.5 cm, upper leaves narrow-oblong, toothed or 3-fid at apex, 5–15 × 2–4 mm. Inflorescences in racemes 5–10 cm long, stems and flower stalks bristly hairy, always held above surrounding foliage, and never leaf-opposed. Sepals > petals, purplish with toothed margins, petals white < sepals. Stamens 2. Seed brown, narrow-ovoid, not winged, c.1.5 mm long.



SIMILAR TAXA

Distinguished from other indigenous *Lepidium* species (except *L. naufragorum*, and the Snares Island form of *L. oleraceum*) by having 2 instead of 4 stamens. From other naturalised species it is distinguished by fruit size, shape, and by upper leaves possessing small, fleshy, marginal teeth which are often paired from a common base. Confused with the native *L. flexicaule* which has 4 stamens, and the inflorescences are leaf-opposed, and so always buried within foliage of fruiting stems.

FLOWERING

Flowers can be present throughout the year

FLOWER COLOURS

Violet/Purple, White

FRUITING

Fruit can be present throughout the year

LIFE CYCLE

Mucilaginous seeds are dispersed by attachment and possibly wind and water (Thorsen et al., 2009).

PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

Easily grown from fresh seed. Inclined to become an aggressive weed in cultivation.

THREATS

Seems to be represented in New Zealand by indigenous and naturalised populations. In indigenous coastal habitats remote from human settlements, it is generally scarce, and found where many of threats known to affect other indigenous *Lepidium* species are active. It does tolerate more stress than other indigenous *Lepidium* species. In other parts of the country the species is very weedy, and like many of the other introduced *Lepidium* species, common. It may well be that we do have truly indigenous populations but some method is needed to discriminate these from introduced populations.

ETYMOLOGY

lepidium: Scale-shaped (pods)

desvauxii: After Desvaux

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

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MORE INFORMATION

<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/lepidium-desvauxii/>