

Leptinella dispersa subsp. rupestris

SYNONYMS

Cotula dispersa subsp. *rupestris* D.G.Lloyd

FAMILY

Asteraceae

AUTHORITY

Leptinella dispersa subsp. *rupestris* (D.G.Lloyd) D.G.Lloyd et C.Webb

FLORA CATEGORY

Vascular – Native

ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes

ENDEMIC GENUS

No

ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Herbs - Dicotyledonous composites

CHROMOSOME NUMBER

2n = 52

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2017 | Threatened – Nationally Critical | Qualifiers: DP, RR, RF, Sp

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2012 | Threatened – Nationally Critical | Qualifiers: RF, Sp

2009 | At Risk – Naturally Uncommon | Qualifiers: RF

2004 | Range Restricted

DISTRIBUTION

Endemic. North Island, in disjunct populations starting near Reef Point, then Karioitahi Gap (west of Waiuku), then in scattered, discontinuous, patches along the South Taranaki Coast to about Whanganui

HABITAT

Strictly coastal where it grows in damp hollows, sand depressions, cliff faces, on slumps and slip scars, and on the margins of coastal streams in permanent turf or sites kept open by local conditions.



Sea cliffs near Whanganui. Photographer: Colin C. Ogle, Licence: CC BY-NC.



In wet sand, sea cliffs near Whanganui. Photographer: Colin C. Ogle, Licence: CC BY-NC.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Dioecious, widely creeping, perennial herb forming loose patches or compact turf depending on local conditions. Rhizomes at or near soil surface, green, dark red-green or purple, pliant, sparsely villous; branches usually single at flowering nodes; leaves in two rows, single at apex, 5-10 mm apart. Short shoots alternate on both sides of rhizomes with distant leaves. Roots white, slender up to 0.3 mm diameter. Leaves 1-pinnatifid, variable in size, submembranous, 3-15 x 1.5-4 mm; lamina obovate to narrowly obovate, bright green, usually with the basal pinnae brown to red-brown pigmented, glabrous, midrib not raised on upper surface; pinnae 3-5 pairs, distant or distal ones overlapping, cut to rachis, elliptic or broadly-elliptic; teeth absent or with 1-2 on larger pinnae or up to 5 on all pinnae, inconspicuous, confined to distal and outer margins, sometimes extending partly onto proximal margin, small, cut 1/3 across pinna, triangular, obtuse. Peduncles on rhizomes, short but equal to leaves in length, 2-50 mm long, ebracteate, pilose-hairy. Capitula 1-2 mm diameter (pistillate capitula 3 mm in fruit); surface convex. Pistillate capitula involucre urceolate; involucre bracts 6-16 in 2 or more unequal rows, broadly elliptic, green, glabrescent, margins scarious, brown; inner involucre bracts extending in length to enclose the subglobose fruiting head; florets 10-26, 1-1.2 mm long, not exceeding involucre bracts, curved, yellow-green, corolla slightly longer than wide; with unequal teeth. Staminate capitula with hemispherical involucre; involucre bracts 4-8 in 1-2 subequal rows, not growing after anthesis; florets more numerous. Cypsela 1.3-1.6 x 0.6-0.8 mm, brown, slightly compressed, at first chartaceous maturing smooth.

SIMILAR TAXA

L. dispersa subsp. *rupestris* (D.G.Lloyd) D.G.Lloyd et C.Webb differs from subsp. *dispersa* by its overall smaller size (leaves up to 15 mm long, pinnae in 3-5 pairs) and strictly dioecious habit.

FLOWERING

September - December

FLOWER COLOURS

Green, Yellow

FRUITING

September - April

PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

Very easy from rooted pieces. The compact habit, and small, closely appressed foliage make it an ideal bowling green ground cover.

THREATS

A local endemic of sporadic distribution, although this plant is unlikely to have ever been that common, extant populations are small, and many now seriously threatened due to coastal erosion and loss of habitat from weeds.

ETYMOLOGY

leptinella: From the Greek word leptos (meaning slender, thin or delicate), referring to the ovary

dispersa: Scattered

rupestris: From the Latin rupes 'rock, cliff', meaning growing in rocky places

WHERE TO BUY

Occasionally available from specialist native plant nurseries.

ATTRIBUTION

Fact sheet prepared for NZPCN by P.J. de Lange 31 August 2006. Description from Lloyd (1972) - as *Cotula dispersa* subsp. *rupestris*.

REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

Lloyd, D.G. 1972: A revision of the New Zealand, Subantarctic, and South American species of *Cotula*, section *Leptinella*. *New Zealand Journal of Botany* 10: 277-372.

NZPCN FACT SHEET CITATION

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<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/leptinella-dispersa-subsp-rupestris/> (Date website was queried)

MORE INFORMATION

<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/leptinella-dispersa-subsp-rupestris/>