

# Leptinella squalida subsp. squalida

## SYNONYMS

*Cotula squalida* (Hook.f.) Hook.f.

## FAMILY

Asteraceae

## AUTHORITY

*Leptinella squalida* Hook.f. subsp. *squalida*

## FLORA CATEGORY

Vascular – Native

## ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes

## ENDEMIC GENUS

No

## ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

## STRUCTURAL CLASS

Herbs - Dicotyledonous composites

## NVS CODE

LEPSSS

## CHROMOSOME NUMBER

2n = 260

## CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2017 | Not Threatened

## PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2012 | Not Threatened

2009 | Not Threatened

2004 | Not Threatened

## DISTRIBUTION

Endemic. North, South (North-West Nelson only) and Chatham Islands. In North Island uncommon north of the Waikato.

## HABITAT

Mostly coastal or inland (0-300 m a.s.l.), in open turf, on coastal cliffs, in coastal turf, along river beds or in open grassland and open, damp places within shrubland and lowland forest. In some urban areas reported as a lawn weed. Often found growing with *Hydrocotyle heteromeria* A.Rich. and *H. microphylla* A.Cunn. Some forms of *L. squalida* subsp. *squalida* have also been gathered from subalpine to alpine habitats in the central North Island.

## WETLAND PLANT INDICATOR STATUS RATING

FAC: Facultative

Commonly occurs as either a hydrophyte or non-hydrophyte (non-wetlands).



*Leptinella squalida* subsp. *squalida* showing growth habit, Cultivated Hamilton, ex Waikato River. Photographer: Peter J. de Lange, Date taken: 09/12/2006, Licence: CC BY-NC.



*Leptinella squalida* subsp. *squalida* close up of flowering capitulum. Terawhiti Station, south Wellington coast. Photographer: Jeremy R. Rolfe, Date taken: 01/11/2006, Licence: CC BY.

## DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Dioecious, widely creeping, fast-growing perennial herb forming dense monospecific turfs or intermingled with other turf species. Rhizomes at or near soil surface, green, dark green to red-green, flexible, pilose hairy; branches usually single at flowering nodes; leaves in two rows, single at apex, 5-30 mm apart. Short shoots alternate on both sides of the rhizomes with distant leaves. Roots slender and weak, up to 0.8 mm diameter. Leaves 1-pinnatifid, 5-10(-20) x 3-20 mm; blade 4-6(-10) mm, bright green or yellow-green with basal 1/3-1/2 brown-pigmented and/or the proximal pinnae, broadly elliptic or obovate, fleshy to membranous, sparsely pilose hairy to moderately pilose hairy or glabrous, midrib raised along majority of ventral surface; pinnae 6-20 pairs, oblong to elliptic, large pinnae suborbicular to obovate, usually equal in length and width, close-set, overlapping; distal pinnae not cut to rhachis, closer together and set at a narrower angle to the rhachis than the middle pinnae, often overlapping; middle and proximal pinnae cut to rhachis, usually distant, but often overlapping; teeth usually present on pinnae with up to 10 per pinna, oblong to acute. Peduncles borne on rhizomes, sparsely pilose hairy, usually longer than leaves, 10-60 mm, ebracteate or with 1 simple bract. Pistillate capitula 3-5 mm elongating to 10 mm diameter in fruit; surface convex; involucre urceolate; involucral bracts 15-40, subequally 3- or more seriate, green, broadly elliptic, somewhat villous, with a broad brown-tipped scarious margin; inner bracts elongating after anthesis to enclose subglobose fruiting head; florets 15-70, 2.2.5 mm long, yellow-green, curved, corolla slightly longer than wide, dentition unequal. Staminate heads 4-7 mm diameter; involucre hemispherical; involucral bracts 5-10, uni- or biseriate, not extending after anthesis; florets more numerous. Cypsela 1.9 x 0.9 mm, initially pale, chartaceous and wrinkled, maturing brown and smooth.

## SIMILAR TAXA

Differs from *L. squalida* subsp. *mediana* (D.G.Lloyd) D.G.Lloyd et C.J.Webb by its less divided leaves with the distal pinnae not cut to the rhachis, close-set and positioned at a narrower angle to the rhachis than the middle pinnae. It is best distinguished from *L. dioica* by the sparsely hairy leaves whose basal pinnae are distinctively brown-pigmented.

## FLOWERING

August - February

## FLOWER COLOURS

Green, Yellow

## FRUITING

September - June

## LIFE CYCLE

Papery cypselae are dispersed by wind and possibly attachment (Thorsen et al., 2009).

## PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

Easy from rooted pieces and tolerant of a wide range of soil, sun and shade conditions. An excellent lawn cover. Very variable, so could benefit from cultivar selection.

## THREATS

Not Threatened but scarce north of Waikato.

## ETYMOLOGY

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

**squalida**: Unattractive

## WHERE TO BUY

Commonly available from retail plant and specialist native plant nurseries

## TAXANOMIC NOTES

Many botanists regard the very different, cytologically distinct subsp. *mediana* (D.G.Lloyd) D.G.Lloyd et C.J.Webb to be a distinct species

## ATTRIBUTION

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

## 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.

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): *Leptinella squalida* subsp. *squalida* Fact Sheet (content continuously updated). New Zealand Plant Conservation Network.

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

## MORE INFORMATION

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