

Oxalis magellanica

COMMON NAME

white oxalis

SYNONYMS

Oxalis lactea Hook.

FAMILY

Oxalidaceae

AUTHORITY

Oxalis magellanica G.Forst.

FLORA CATEGORY

Vascular – Native

ENDEMIC TAXON

No

ENDEMIC GENUS

No

ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Herbs - Dicotyledons other than Composites

NVS CODE

OXAMAG

CHROMOSOME NUMBER

2n = 20

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2017 | Not Threatened | Qualifiers: SO

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2012 | Not Threatened

2009 | Not Threatened

2004 | Not Threatened

DISTRIBUTION

Indigenous. New Zealand (North, South, Stewart, and Chatham Islands), Australia and South America

HABITAT

Coastal to montane where it is mainly confined to indigenous forested habitats, though sometimes extending into the alpine zone. A species of riparian habitats, usually found within the flood zone of streams and rivers, and around the plunge pools of waterfalls. Provided its habitat is permanently moist it may be found growing in full sun but it is more usually seen in semi-shaded situations.

WETLAND PLANT INDICATOR STATUS RATING

FAC: Facultative

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



Waiau falls, Coromandel, October.

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



Ruahine range, February. Photographer: John Smith-Dodsworth, Licence: CC BY-NC.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Rhizomatous or stoloniferous perennial herb without bulbils or taproot and forming dense to diffuse patches up to 100 x 200 mm. Stems slender, internodes much reduced such that leaves appear to be radical. Leaves 3-foliolate, glabrous and dark green to glaucous green above, paler, and sparsely covered in appressed-pubescent hairs beneath, margins ciliate; leaflets sessile, 2-12 x 2-13 mm, broadly obcordate; sinus cut to 1/5 (rarely 1/3) leaflet length with callus in notch, lobes oblong to obovate, apices rounded, 2-6 mm apart; petioles 10-70 mm long, with sparse long spreading hairs; stipules conspicuous, up to 5 mm long, membranous, apex rounded or truncate, glabrous, persistent. Inflorescences axillary, 1-flowered; peduncles usually longer than leaves, sparsely hairy. Sepals elliptic, 3-5 mm long, ciliate; petals white, 6-12 mm long. Capsule ovoid to globose, 4-5 mm long, glabrous. Seeds smooth (without transverse ribs).

SIMILAR TAXA

Easily recognised by the preference for moist riparian habitats in indigenous forest; lack of bulbils; rhizomatous or stoloniferous habit, with shortly erect stems; glaucescent to dark green leaves and large solitary white flowers.

FLOWERING

September - March (sometimes year round)

FLOWER COLOURS

White

FRUITING

October - July (often present year round)

PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

Easily grown from fresh seed and by the division of whole plants. Does best in semi-shade in a permanently moist soil. It does not cope with drying out. An attractive, non-invasive species. A form with double (peloric) flowers is occasionally available from garden centres.

ETYMOLOGY

oxalis: From the Greek word oxus meaning acid or sharp

magellanica: Named after the Magellan Straits in southern South America

WHERE TO BUY

Occasionally available from specialist native plant nurseries.

ATTRIBUTION

Fact sheet prepared for NZPCN by P.J. de Lange 1 November 2005. Description adapted from Webb et al. (1988).

REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

Webb, C.J.; Sykes, W.R.; Garnock-Jones, P.J. 1988: Flora of New Zealand. Vol. IV. Naturalised Pteridophytes, Gymnosperms, Dicotyledons. Christchurch, New Zealand, Botany Division, D.S.I.R.

NZPCN FACT SHEET CITATION

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MORE INFORMATION

<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/oxalis-magellanica/>