

Oxalis rubens

SYNONYMS

In New Zealand this species has been confused with *O. stricta* and *O. perennans*. *Oxalis stricta* is not in New Zealand and *O. perennans* is an uncommon weed.

FAMILY

Oxalidaceae

AUTHORITY

Oxalis rubens Haw.

FLORA CATEGORY

Vascular – Native

ENDEMIC TAXON

No

ENDEMIC GENUS

No

ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Herbs - Dicotyledons other than Composites

NVS CODE

OXARUB

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2017 | Not Threatened | Qualifiers: SO, SO

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2012 | Not Threatened

2009 | Not Threatened

2004 | Not Threatened

DISTRIBUTION

Indigenous. Australia and New Zealand. In New Zealand widespread in the North, South and Chatham Islands.

HABITAT

Mostly coastal (sometimes inland on limestone bluffs) where it is especially common on sand dunes and associated sand soils. Plants usually grow up through other supporting vegetation and are often missed except when in flower.



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



Karekare. Photographer: Jeremy R. Rolfe, Date taken: 05/11/2008, Licence: CC BY.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Perennial herb without bulbils; taproot stout, woody. Stems usually glabrous sometimes covered in sparse antrorse hairs; erect to ascending up to 380 mm long. Leaves all cauline, sometimes subopposite or whorled, 3-foliolate; leaflets sessile, cuneate-obcordate, 2-9 x 2-11 mm, angular, bilobed, purplish-green to subglaucous, more or less glabrous above, sparsely pubescent below, margins ciliate, sinus cut to about half leaflet length, lobes obovate to obovate, straight divergent, apices broad-obtuse, 1.5-7.0 mm apart; petioles c.7-30 mm long, hairs mostly antrorse; stipules usually conspicuous, to 3 mm long, membranous and truncate or apex tapering abruptly to pedicel, ciliate. Inflorescences axillary 1-2-flowered; peduncles longer than leaves, antrorse hairy; pedicels erect. Sepals oblong, 3-4 mm long, often ciliate; petals yellow 7-11 mm long. Capsule cylindrical, 13-24 mm long, thickened in middle, usually densely retrorse-hairy. Seeds transversely ribbed.

SIMILAR TAXA

Most likely to be confused with *O. perennans*, which can grow in similar habitats, and from which *O. rubens* differs by its more erect habit, inconspicuous, keeled stipules, and stout, woody taproot. It has a superficial similarity to *O. thompsoniae* which differs by its consistently hairy stems, leaves and capsules, shorter fruits and smooth or only weakly ridged seeds.

FLOWERING

September - March

FLOWER COLOURS

Yellow

FRUITING

October - July

PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

Easily grown from fresh seed and stem cuttings. Not inclined to be as weedy as *O. exilis*. The purplish-green to subglaucous leaves and large, showy yellow flowers make it particularly attractive. Does best in full sun in a sandy soil. Ideal plant for sand country.

ETYMOLOGY

oxalis: From the Greek word oxus meaning acid or sharp

rubens: Red

WHERE TO BUY

Not commercially available

TAXONOMIC NOTES

A distinctive, potentially undescribed species allied to *Oxalis rubens* occurs sparingly along the eastern South Island within the montane to alpine zone, where it colonises mainly active and semi-mobile scree.

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-rubens/>