

Ranunculus flammula

COMMON NAME

spearwort

FAMILY

Ranunculaceae

AUTHORITY

Ranunculus flammula L.

FLORA CATEGORY

Vascular – Exotic

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Herbs - Dicotyledons other than Composites

NVS CODE

RANFLA

CONSERVATION STATUS

Not applicable

BRIEF DESCRIPTION

R. flammula is a perennial herb with bright yellow, butter-cup like flowers. The leaves are linear to lance-shaped, upright and not divided.

DISTRIBUTION

Throughout most of the North and South Island.

HABITAT

Wet sites such as drains, ditches, ponds and swamps.

WETLAND PLANT INDICATOR STATUS RATING

FACW: Facultative Wetland

Usually is a hydrophyte but occasionally found in uplands (non-wetlands).

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

A fleshy perennial herb with small pale yellow flowers (10 to 15 mm in diameter). Stems are slender, creeping or upright to 50 cm or more long. The leaves at the base of the stems are up to 8 cm long, and occur on stems up to 10 cm long. The stem leaves are comparatively smaller, lanceolate, entire or finely toothed.

SIMILAR TAXA

No other buttercup (*Ranunculus*) has an undivided lanceolate leaf.

FLOWERING

October to March

FLOWER COLOURS

Yellow

FRUITING

Autumn

LIFE CYCLE

Water fowl feed on fruit and disperse seed and also seeds may be dispersed by water movement.

YEAR NATURALISED

1907



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



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

ORIGIN

Europe, Caucasus, Northwest Africa

REASON FOR INTRODUCTION

Unknown, possibly a seed contaminant or ornamental pond plant

CONTROL TECHNIQUES

Not usually controlled in New Zealand, but may be controlled manually, mechanically or herbicidally depending on situation.

ETYMOLOGY

ranunculus: From the Latin 'rana' frog, meaning little frog and probably refers to the plants typical marshy habit where frogs abound

ATTRIBUTION

Factsheet prepared by Paul Champion and Deborah Hofstra (NIWA).

REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

Popay et al (2010). An illustrated guide to common weeds of New Zealand, third edition. NZ Plant Protection Society Inc, 416pp.

Johnson PN, Brooke PA (1989). Wetland plants in New Zealand. DSIR Field Guide, DSIR Publishing, Wellington. 319pp.

Coffey BT, Clayton JS (1988). New Zealand water plants: a guide to plants found in New Zealand freshwaters. Ruakura Agricultural Centre. 65pp

MORE INFORMATION

<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/ranunculus-flammula/>