



Centipeda minima subsp. *minima*

Common Name(s):

sneezeweed, centipeda

Current Threat Status (2012):

Threatened - Nationally Endangered

Distribution:

Indigenous. New Zealand: Kermadecs (Raoul Island), and North Island. The majority of historic records unsupported by herbarium specimens have to be regarded as unreliable due to confusion with three other species recently recognised in New Zealand, the endemic *C. aotearoana*, and indigenous *C. cunninghamii* and *C. elatinoides*. Recent confirmed records of *C. minima* have come recently from Raoul Island (May 2011) and from the North Island, from about the Waikato and Bay of Plenty north. Present also in Australia, India, Russia, China, Japan, Malesia and on some Pacific Islands.

Habitat:

Wet, or partially dried out lake, pond and stream margins. Often in coastal areas. This species requires open sparsely vegetated ground. It cannot tolerate any competition, so grows in the most open sites it can find (wet or dry). The largest recently discovered populations in New Zealand come from rubbish dumps, poorly draining foot paths, and muddy ground associated with poorly drained airstrips.

Features*:

Aromatic, usually prostrate, annual, bright green, spreading herb up to 250 mm diam and 200 mm high. Branches numerous, spreading, frequently rooting from lower leaf nodes, glabrescent or finely covered in cottony, wispy hairs. Leaves spatulate, rhomboidal 3-27 mm x 1.5-11 mm, light green to dark green, never glaucescent, usually glabrescent sometimes cottony hairy, lamina margin serrated with 1-4 pairs of teeth, these usually confined to the upper third of lamina. Inflorescence a solitary, sessile to subsessile, axillary, leaf opposed capitulum. Capitula hemispherical to subglobular, 1.5-5 mm diam., greenish-yellow; involucre bracts obovate, 1-1.6 mm, receptacle convex; corolla of female flowers 0.1-0.25 mm, bisexual florets 0.3-0.4 mm. Fruiting heads disarticulating at maturity. Cypselas narrowly obcuneate, 0.6-1.5 mm, truncate or obtuse, with 4-8 ribs bearing short antrorse bristles, uniting as a pale, pithy apical cap in distal quarter.

Flowering:

(August-) December (-May)

Fruiting:

(August-) December (-May)

Threats:

The major threats come from aggressive wetland weeds, such as Mercer grass (*Paspalum distichum*), which rapidly smothers the open muddy ground this species favours. This species is weedy and opportunistic and so can potentially be found anywhere there is suitably open, muddy, ground.

*Attribution:

Fact sheet prepared for NZPCN by P.J. de Lange 5 May 2005. Description adapted from Walsh (2001).

References and further reading:

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

Walsh, N. G. 2001: A revision of *Centipeda* (Asteraceae). *Muelleria* 15: 33-64.

For more information, visit:

http://nzpcn.org.nz/flora_details.asp?ID=10



Caption: Mat growth form
Photographer: Erik Eyndhoven



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