



Urtica perconfusa

Common Name(s):

swamp nettle

Current Threat Status (2012):

At Risk - Declining

Distribution:

Endemic. New Zealand - and North and South Islands from the Central North Island south.

Habitat:

Fertile, lowland swamps, lakes and river margins, swampy shrubland and forest, often growing over tree stumps and rushes or through dense sedges such as swards of *Carex secta*.

Features*:

Lianoid, slender, perennial, rhizomatous herb 0.45–2.0 m, usually much-branched, scrambling or climbing. Stem indumentum of few stinging hairs with pluricellular base c. 0.2–0.5 mm overall and erect setae 0.2–0.4 mm long and few simple trichomes 0.2–0.3 mm long. Leaf lamina 40–100 × 4–10 mm narrowly ovate; surface sparsely pubescent with short simple trichomes 0.2–0.5 mm long and few stinging hairs (abaxially only on the veins), adaxially with punctiform cystoliths; leaf base rounded; margins regularly dentate, rarely doubly dentate, with 12–20 teeth on each side; leaf apex acuminate; lamina thinly membranaceous; stipules free (4 per node) 2–4 mm long; petioles thin, flexuose, 15–45 mm long. Plants monoecious. Staminate flowers with tepals c. 1.3–1.8 mm long. Pistillate flowers with short tepals 0.5–0.8 mm long and long tepals 0.8–1.2 mm long, sparsely pubescent, esetulose. Inflorescence glomerulous, 3–10 mm long, usually shorter than petioles. Mature fruit with longer tepals 1.2–1.5 mm long, achenes subcircular in outline, rounded at base and at the tip, laterally flattened, c. 1.2–2.0 × 0.8–1.3 mm.

Flowering:

Flowering occurs throughout the year

Fruiting:

Fruits may be found throughout the year

Threats:

A sparsely distributed species of lowland to montane lake margins and fertile to semi-fertile wetlands. Easily overlooked because of its penchant for grow at the base of *Carex secta* trunks, or threaded through *Phormium tenax*. Being an adaptable species it is often found within willow (*Salix* spp.) car, sometimes as a low epiphyte on willow trunks. In all these habitats it is at risk from wetland clearance, drainage and also the spread of weeds such as wandering jew (*Tradescantia fluminensis*). Some large populations in the Horowhenua have been destroyed by the canalisation of streams and through willow control.

*Attribution:

Fact Sheet by Peter J. de Lange (15 February 2016). Description based on Grosse-Veldmann et al. (2016).

References and further reading:

Grosse-Veldmann, B.; Conn, B.J.; Weigend, M. 2016: Weeding the nettles IV: A redefinition of *Urtica incisa* and allies in New Zealand and Australia, including the segregation of two new species *Urtica sykesii* and *U. perconfusa*. *Phytotaxa* 245(4): 251-261.

For more information, visit:

http://nzpcn.org.nz/flora_details.asp?ID=211



Caption: Lake Wairarapa.

Photographer: Pat Enright



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