



## *Sebaea ovata*

### Common Name(s):

Sebaea

### Current Threat Status (2012):

Threatened - Nationally Critical

### Distribution:

Indigenous. In New Zealand formerly known from both North and South Islands, now confined to two natural populations in the North Island near Wanganui, and two deliberately established populations on the remote Pouto Peninsula, near Dargaville. Present also in Australia (South Australia, Victoria, New South Wales and Tasmania) where it is very common.

### Habitat:

Coastal. Associated with damp, sparsely-vegetated dune slacks, depressions, and associated sand plains. In Australia more widespread, ranging from the coast inland to montane forest, often but not exclusively in seasonally damp ground.

### Features\*:

Annual, sparingly branched, erect herb, 50-300 mm tall. Stems 4-angled, hairless, pale yellow-green. Leaves, sessile, in opposite pairs, 6.5 x 15 x 5-10 mm, fleshy, pale green to almost blue-green, ovate to broad-ovate or suborbicular, apex obtuse to subacute, well spaced along stem; midrib prominent, with one conspicuous longitudinal vein either side. Inflorescence a mainly terminal cyme, with a few solitary flowers borne within the subtending leaf axils. Flowers 6.5 mm long, scarcely opening; calyx-lobes 5, narrowly ovate-lanceolate, acute with rigid narrowly winged keel. Corolla tube 4 mm, straight, pale yellow, corolla lobes 5, 3 mm long, pale yellow, linear-lanceolate to lanceolate, often twisted. Ovary 2-locular. Capsules ovoid-ellipsoid, 5 mm long. Seeds fine, dust-like.

### Flowering:

November - January

### Fruiting:

December - February

### Threats:

Though formerly ranging from near Hokianga Harbour in the North Island to Lake Ellesmere in the South Island, by the 1980s *S. ovata* was known from only two sites near Wanganui. At both locations it is seriously at risk from weed encroachment, caused in part by changing water levels in the adjacent dune systems but also due to the release of rabbit calicivirus, which having locally eliminated rabbits, facilitated the spread of weeds normally suppressed by these animals into suitable *Sebaea* habitat. At both locations *Sebaea* is being maintained only by diligent management. This management has involved weed spraying and the construction of fresh habitats using a bull dozer.

### \*Attribution:

Fact Sheet prepared by P.J. de Lange 20 October 2003. Description based on Allan (1961) supplemented with observations made from fresh and/or dried herbarium specimens

### References and further reading:

Allan. H.H. 1961: Flora of New Zealand. Vol. I, Government Printer, Wellington.

Growth and habitat of *Sebaea ovata* (Gentianaceae) in New Zealand and Australia by P.D. Champion, D.E. Hofstra, M.E. Auger, and C.E.C. Gemmill.

Ogle, C.C. 1989. *Sebaea ovata* and its habitat near Wanganui. Wellington Botanical Society Bulletin, 45: 92-99

### For more information, visit:

[http://nzpcn.org.nz/flora\\_details.asp?ID=39](http://nzpcn.org.nz/flora_details.asp?ID=39)



**Caption:** In cultivation ex Whanganui.

**Photographer:** Simon Walls



**Caption:** Seedling in cultivation ex Whanganui.

**Photographer:** Simon Walls