



## *Sicyos australis*

### Common Name(s):

ambush vine

### Current Threat Status (2012):

Non Resident Native - Coloniser

### Distribution:

Indigenous. New Zealand: North Island (Northland, Auckland, Waikato and Bay of Plenty). Also Australia and formerly Norfolk and Lord Howe Islands.

### Habitat:

Coastal forest or lowland forest, often in scrub or amongst bracken fern.

### Features\*:

Herbaceous climber; stems annual, up to 10m long, 5-mm diameter, sparsely hirsute with simple multicellular hairs and glandular hairs, glabrescent. Tendrils 3–5-branched. Leaves: petiole 10–65 mm long, scaberulous; lamina ovate or broadly ovate in outline, 35–195 × 45–200mm, cordate with the basal sinus broad, the lobes not overlapping, acuminate, shallowly to deeply palmately 5- or 7-lobed, the lobes broadly triangular, acute or acuminate, margins dentate with apiculate teeth, sparsely scaberulous adaxially and abaxially with simple hairs, more densely and coarsely along veins. Male inflorescence an 8–19-flowered raceme 25–155 mm long; peduncle 15–125 mm long, sparsely scaberulous; rhachis glandular hairy. Male flowers: pedicels 3–11 mm long; hypanthium broadly campanulate, 2.4–2.7 mm diameter; calyx lobes linear, 0.4–0.7 mm long; corolla rotate, 4.5–7.8 mm diameter, mostly glabrous abaxially, the lobe apices puberulous, glabrous adaxially, white, 5-lobed, the lobes broadly triangular-ovate, obtuse; 2.0–2.6 mm long; disc c.1.2 mm in diameter; staminal column 1.5–1.8 mm long; staminal head 1.7–2.2 mm diameter. Female inflorescence an 8–11-flowered head; peduncle 8–33 mm long. Female flowers: subsessile; ovary ovate, attenuate, c.3 mm long, 1.4 mm diameter, minutely and densely echinulate with barbed aculei; hypanthium above the constriction broadly campanulate, c.1.5 mm in diameter, minutely glandular hairy surrounding the disc; calyx lobes linear, 0.4–0.7 mm long; corolla 2.5–3.5 mm diameter, mostly glabrous abaxially, the lobe apices puberulous, glabrous adaxially, white, 5-lobed, the lobes triangular-ovate, obtuse, c.1.6mm long; disc c.1 mm in diameter; style c.1.4mm long; stigma 2-lobed, the lobes c.0.3mm long, recurved. Fruit ovate, rarely fusiform, 6.4–9.5 × 2.8–4.0 mm, apically attenuate, the surface ± glabrous or scabridulous with short hairs, echinate; aculei dense, 1.6–3.6 mm long, retrorsely barbed. Seeds ellipsoidal, 4.0–5.5 × 2.8–3.4 mm brown.

### Flowering:

In suitable conditions flowers are produced throughout the year.

### Fruiting:

In suitable conditions fruits are produced throughout the year.

### Threats:

Previously listed under the tag name *S. aff. australis* (b) (AK 289786; Mangere Stonefields) by de Lange et al. (2009) as a "Coloniser" now that the exact identity of *Sicyos australis* has been clarified (Telford et al. 2012) this status is still appropriate. It appears that *Sicyos australis* has recently established in New Zealand, presumably (or at least initially) by natural means. It is now locally distributed over a large part of mainly eastern northern New Zealand and it is actively spreading from these areas into farmland, plantation forestry and urban wasteland. Although it is susceptible to cucumber, watermelon and zucchini mosaic virus, it seems less so than the endemic *S. mawhai* and it is secure at most known sites.

### \*Attribution:

Fact sheet prepared for NZPCN by P.J. de Lange 4 January 2004. Description based on Telford et al.

### References and further reading:

Cameron, E.K. 1991. Mangere a small forest remnant and *Sicyos australis*. *Auckland Botanical Society Journal*, 46: 83–84

de Lange, P.J.; Norton, D.A.; Courtney, S.P.; Heenan, P.B.; Barkla, J.W.; Cameron, E.K.; Hitchmough, R.; Townsend, A.J. 2009: Threatened and uncommon plants of New Zealand (2008 revision). *New Zealand Journal of Botany* 47: 61–96.

Delmiglio, C.; Pearson, M.N. 2006: Effects and incidence of cucumber mosaic virus, watermelon mosaic virus and zucchini yellow mosaic virus in New Zealand's only native cucurbit, *Sicyos australis*. *Australasian Plant Pathology* 35: 29–35.

Telford, I.R.H.; Sebastian, P.; de Lange, P.J.; Bruhl, J.J.; Renner, S.S. 2012: Morphological and molecular data reveal three rather than one species of *Sicyos* (Cucurbitaceae) in Australia, New Zealand, and the islands of the South West Pacific. *Australian Systematic Botany* 25: 188–201.

### For more information, visit:

[http://nzpcn.org.nz/flora\\_details.asp?ID=40](http://nzpcn.org.nz/flora_details.asp?ID=40)



**Caption:** Otuaatua Stonefields, Manukau. Apr 2012.

**Photographer:** Peter de Lange



**Caption:** Fruit. Otuaatua Stonefields, Manukau. Apr 2012.

**Photographer:** Peter de Lange