



Sonchus grandifolius

Common Name(s):

Chatham Island sow thistle, Embergeria

Current Threat Status (2012):

At Risk - Recovering

Distribution:

Endemic to the Chatham Islands. Found on the main islands and some islets.

Habitat:

Sand dunes (usually the foredunes), also coastal cliff ledges, clay promontories and talus slopes.

Features*:

Thistle-like herb with stout rhizomes and pale green fleshy leaves up to 1 m long, irregularly divided into toothed lobes. It has a milky sap. Erect flower heads with florets that are light purple to pale yellow. Plant dies down in winter. The plant flowers from December to February and fruits in late summer to autumn.

Flowering:

December - February

Fruiting:

Late summer and autumn.

Threats:

Domestic stock and other browsing animals (including pigs, possums and rodents) are still a threat on Chatham and Pitt Islands. Competition from invasive exotic plants, coastal development and coastal erosion is also a problem in some areas. However, this species has made a spectacular recovery over large parts of its range, and is actively colonising new areas of beach and coastal cliff. It now occurs in numerous secure sites across the Chatham Island group.

*Attribution:

Fact Sheet prepared for NZPCN by P.J. de Lange 1 August 2003.

References and further reading:

Garnock-Jones P.J. 2014: Evidence-based review of the taxonomic status of New Zealand's endemic seed plant genera, *New Zealand Journal of Botany*, DOI: [10.1080/0028825X.2014.902854](https://doi.org/10.1080/0028825X.2014.902854)

Heenan, P.B.; Mitchell, A.D.; de Lange, P.J.; Keeling, J.; Paterson, A.M. 2010: Late Cenozoic origin and diversification of Chatham Islands endemic plant species revealed by analyses of DNA sequence data. *New Zealand Journal of Botany* 48: 83–136.

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

Walls, G.; Baird, A.; de Lange, P.J.; Sawyer, J.W.D. 2002: Threatened plants of the Chatham Islands. Wellington, Department of Conservation.

For more information, visit:

http://nzpcn.org.nz/flora_details.asp?ID=62



Caption: Kaingaroa, Chatham Islands

Photographer: John Sawyer



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