

Hypericum perforatum

COMMON NAME

St John's wort

FAMILY

Hypericaceae

AUTHORITY

Hypericum perforatum L.

FLORA CATEGORY

Vascular – Exotic

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Herbs - Dicotyledons other than Composites

NVS CODE

HYPPER

CONSERVATION STATUS

Not applicable

HABITAT

Terrestrial. Disturbed short tussockland, herbfield, bare land.

WETLAND PLANT INDICATOR STATUS RATING

UPL: Obligate Upland

Rarely is a hydrophyte, almost always in uplands (non-wetlands).

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Hairless perennial herb to 1 m tall. Roots with slender, creeping rhizomes. Stems singly or severally from base, erect, round with 2 ridges, woody at base, upper branches in opposite pairs at 45 degrees. Leaves in opposite pairs, stalkless, narrow to oval, 10–27 x 1–8 mm, with many translucent glandular dots. Flowerhead a terminal, flat-topped panicle, dense, many-flowered. Flowers star-like, 8–20 mm diam, golden yellow, with 5 black-dotted petals, Dec–May. Stems usually die in autumn, leaving prostrate, barren, leafy shoots, often forming dense mats.

SIMILAR TAXA

may be confused with many other closely related *Hypericum* spp, 5 adventive and 2 native. The native species lack black glandular dots, and are low to mat forming.

FLOWERING

December, January, February, March, April, May

FLOWER COLOURS

Black, Yellow

LIFE CYCLE

Perennial. Relatively long-lived. Reproduces from seed and rhizomes; numerous seeds are contained in capsules. Seeds via wind (minor), possibly livestock. Rhizomes via soil and water movement.

YEAR NATURALISED

1869

ORIGIN

Eur, W Asia, N Afr



St John's wort. Photographer: John Barkla, Licence: CC BY.



Pellucid and black glands on leaves and stem viewed from below. Hutt Valley. Photographer: Jeremy R. Rolfe, Date taken: 27/12/2006, Licence: CC BY.

REASON FOR INTRODUCTION

Accidental

TOLERANCES

Tolerates hot to cold temperatures, damp and drought, wind damage and is not grazed (poisonous).

ETYMOLOGY

hypericum: From the Greek hyper (above) and eikon (picture), the plant was hung above pictures to ward off evil spirits

perforatum: From the Latin perforatus 'pierced with holes', depending on the species this may refer to the foliage covered in punctate oil glands

MORE INFORMATION

<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/hypericum-perforatum/>