



New Zealand pigmyweed

(*Crassula helmsii*)

Classification

Order	Saxifragales
Family	Crassulaceae
Genus	<i>Crassula</i>
Species	<i>C. helmsii</i> (Kirk) Cockayne 1907

Originated in the southern Pacific, Australia and New Zealand. Introduced for use in aquariums.

Description

- Stalks range from 10 to 130 cm in length and each node can produce roots.
- Leaves have no stem, are straight and curve upward, length 4 to 20 mm, width 0.7 to 1.6 mm
- The small, solitary flowers have 4 white or pink petals:
 - that develop in the axil of the leaves
 - exclusively on the emergent part of the plant
- The number of branches increases when the water level drops

Ecology and reproduction

- The species can develop on different types of wetlands:
 - marshes, ponds, lakes, etc., at depths of up to 3 metres
 - on land saturated with water
- The species can accept widely varying water qualities, e.g. warm and cold water, fresh water and salt water, high or low pH
- High dispersal capabilities via:
 - any stalk fragment containing a node
 - turions (the small buds growing at the top of stalks in the fall)

Documentation

- Saint-Maxent T. 2002. Les espèces animales et végétales susceptibles de proliférer dans les milieux aquatiques et subaquatiques : rapport de stage de DESS Gestion des ressources naturelles renouvelables. p.80-83. European plant protection organisation. 2007. *Crassula helmsii*. EPPO Bulletin. Vol. 37 (2) - 2 pp.
- Bretagne observatory for biodiversity and the natural heritage. 2011. New Zealand pigmyweed (*Crassula helmsii*). On-line descriptive data: <http://www.observatoire-biodiversite-bretagne.fr/especes-invasives/Flore-continentale/Invasives-averees/La-Crassule-de-Helm-Crassula-helmsii>

Author: Emilie Mazaubert, Irstea

