

# *Senecio squarrosus*



*Senecio squarrosus*.  
Tasmanian Herbarium specimen.

**FAMILY:** ASTERACEAE

**BOTANICAL NAME:** *Senecio squarrosus*,  
A.Rich., *Voy. Astrolabe* 2: 107 t.35 (1834)

**COMMON NAME:** Leafy groundsel

**COMMONWEALTH STATUS:** (*EPBC Act*) Not Listed

**TASMANIAN STATUS:** (*TSP Act*) rare

## Description

An annual or short lived perennial herb with an erect stem, between 40-80 cm tall.

**Stems:** The stems are finely marked with longitudinal lines and have web-like hairs.

**Leaves:** The lower leaves are lance-shaped with a base that narrows and becomes stalk-like. The leaf margins are coarsely toothed and the entire leaf is between 7-10 cm long. The upper leaves are progressively smaller and stalkless with a wide base. The margins are toothed and bent backwards. All leaves have green upper surfaces, which are hairless or somewhat rough to the touch. The lower surfaces are often purplish with web-like hairs. **Flowers:** This species has only a few flower heads. The florets are a deep yellow colour and are longer than the phyllaries (leaf-like structures associated with the flower heads). There are between 16-20 phyllaries, which are 7-8 mm long and green or purplish with clear overlapping margins. Flowering is from October to December (Flora of Victoria). **Fruit:** The fruit is small, dry, leathery and black in colour, approximately 2 mm long. The fruit are also cylindrical and ribbed, with the ribs being densely covered in short hairs. The pappus (ring of scales or hairs found on top of fruit) consists of short white hairs (description from Curtis 1963).

## Distribution and Habitat

On the mainland this species occurs in all the states with the exception of Queensland and the Northern Territory. It is also known from New Zealand and Timor. The Tasmanian distribution of *Senecio squarrosus* includes the north around the Launceston area and on Gull Island in the Furneaux Group and the south near Hobart, with populations at Cambridge, Kingston and Blackmans Bay. In the south-east, *Senecio squarrosus* has been recorded from Dunalley. This species is associated with dry sclerophyll forest (Curtis 1963, TPLUC 1996).

### **Key Sites and Populations**

Key sites include the Queens Domain (Hobart), water reserve at Mt Nelson, Kingston, northern slopes of Knocklofty Hill (Hobart), mouth of Humphrey Rivulet, Holyman Drive (Hobart Airport), Carr Villa (Launceston), Conical Rocks and Gull Island (Cape Barren Island).

### **Known Reserves**

Carr Villa Conservation Area, Gull Island Conservation Area, Heathy Hills Nature Reserve, Huntingdon Nature Reserve, Launceston Golf Course Private Sanctuary, Reedy Marsh Forest Reserve and the South Bruny National Park.

### **Ecology and Management**

This species requires disturbance and information suggests that recruitment occurs after fire. Forest clearance has been identified as an adverse impact on *Senecio squarrosus*. Regular burning between 5-15 years has been suggested as a management strategy (TPLUC 1996).

Insects are the most likely pollination vector for this species (A. Hingston pers. comm.).

### **Conservation Status Assessment**

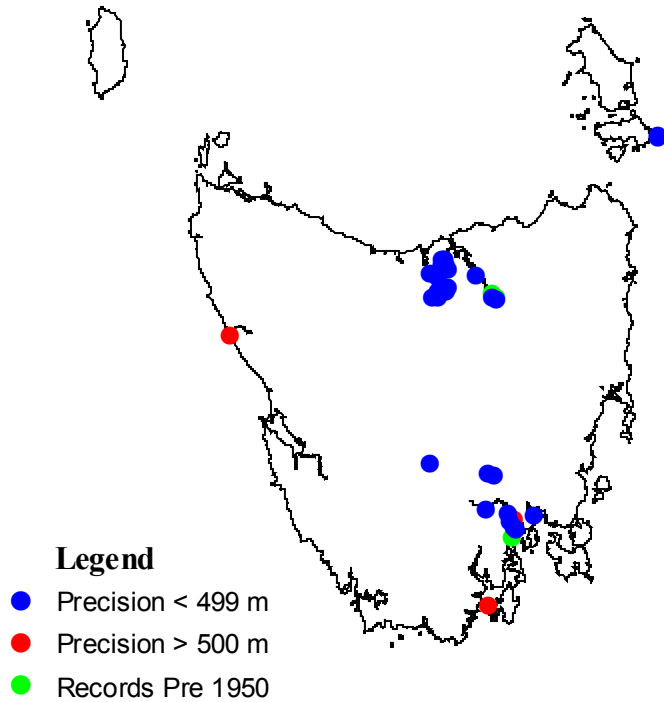
There is no immediate need for reassessment of *Senecio squarrosus*.

### **Further Information**

- Curtis, WM 1963, *The Student's Flora of Tasmania*, Part 2, Government Printer, Hobart.
- Kirkpatrick, JB 1991, *Tasmanian Native Bush: A Management Handbook*, Tasmanian Environment Centre, Hobart.
- Tasmanian Public Land Use Commission 1996, *Environment & Heritage Report Vol IV, Background Report*, Part C, Tasmanian Commonwealth Regional Forest Agreement, Hobart.

## Tasmanian Distribution

(As per Threatened Species Unit records, June 2003)



### 1:25 000 Map Sheets

Bridgenorth, Deloraine, Elderslie, Exeter, Hardwicke, Harford, Hobart, Launceston, New Norfolk, Ouse, Parkham, Partridge, Prospect, Taroona, Thirsty, West Frankford.

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