

Willow primrose (514)

Summary

- Widespread. In Australia, and most Pacific island countries.
- Annual, or perennial, fast-growing, invasive weed of wetlands - streams, ponds, marshes, swamps, ditches. Weed of rice, taro, cocoa, coconut and sugarcane plantations, pastures, along roadsides. Roots grow from lower nodes and extensive mats develop.
- Stems hairy, green, reddish-brown, up to 3m, sometimes woody at base. Leaves, alternate, pear-shaped to oval (up to 15cm), hairy, short stalks. Flowers, terminal or from leaf axils, with four yellow, oval petals (10-20mm long), with leaf-like sepals beneath. Fruits long (20-45mm), brown, ribbed with sepals attached, containing many seeds.
- Spread: vegetatively on creeping stems that root; seed, possibly in water, or in mud on machinery/vehicles, footwear. Plant trade: used as an ornamental and in traditional medicines.
- Biosecurity: risk is unofficial introduction of seed and plants. Available on Internet. Check imported machinery/vehicles.
- Biocontrol: none.
- Cultural control: hand-weed; slashing; mulch (5-10cm) to prevent seedling growth; clean soil and seeds from machinery/vehicles; check clothing.
- Chemical control: In Australia, glyphosate registered as spot-spray for other *Ludwigia* species in semi-aquatic and aquatic situations. In Fiji, glyphosate, 2,4-D, dicamba, MCPA.



Photo 1. Willow primrose, *Ludwigia octovalvis*, photographed in a Tongan swamp.



Photo 2. Long, spear-shaped leaves, willow primrose, *Ludwigia octovalvis*.



Photo 3. Flowers, fruits, stem and leaves, *Ludwigia octovalvis*. Note the sepals remain attached at the top of the developing fruits.

Common Name

Willow primrose. It is also known as false primrose, primrose willow, yellow willow herb, Mexican primrose-willow.

Scientific Name

Ludwigia octovalis. It is a member of the Onagraceae. The plant is variable and several subspecies are recognised. Identifications require confirmation by a botanist familiar with the genus.

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Information from CABI (2015) *Ludwigia octovalvis* (primrose willow). Invasive Species Compendium. (<https://www.cabi.org/isc/datasheet/31671>); and *Ludwigia octovalvis* (Jacq.) P.H. Raven. PlantNET. New South Wales Flora Online. Australian National Botanic Gardens. (<https://plantnet.rbg Syd.nsw.gov.au/cgi-bin/NSWfl.pl?page=nswfl&lvl=sp&name=Ludwigia-octovalvis>); and Fern K (2021) *Ludwigia octovalvis* (Jacq.) R.H. Raven. Tropical Plants Database. (<https://tropical.theferns.info/viewtropical.php?id=Ludwigia+octovalvis>); and from *Ludwigia octovalvis* (2021) Wikipedia. (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ludwigia_octovalvis). Photo 1 Tau'olunga (2007) *Ludwigia octovalvis*, (loano) in a Tongan swamp. (https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Ludwigia_octovalvis5.jpg). Photo 2 Gerald McCormack. Cook Islands biodiversity. (<http://cookislands.bishopmuseum.org/>). Photo 3 Forest and Kim Starr. *Ludwigia octovalvis* (flowers and leaves). Location: Maui, Kanaha Beach. (https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Starr_070413-6937_Ludwigia_octovalvis.jpg).

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