

# *Plantago major* L.

## Family:

Plantaginaceae

Linnaeus, C. (1753) *Species Plantarum* 1: 112. Type: Habitat in Europa ad vias.

## Common name:

Plantain, greater; Greater plantain; Greater ribwort

## Stem

Perennial acaulescent herbs, variable with short stout, erect, truncate, rootstocks and numerous adventitious roots.

## Leaves

Leaves in a basal rosette; Leaf blades broadly ovate to cordate, about 7.5-14 x 5-8 cm, petioles about 3-18 cm long, often much longer than the leaf blades. Venation obvious, consisting of 5-9 longitudinal veins each of which is depressed on the upper surface of the leaf blade. Petioles channelled on the upper surface, bases expanded and clasping the stem.

## Flowers

Flowers borne in spikes about 8-15 cm long. Peduncles about 12-20 cm long. Sepals keeled, about 2.5 x 1.5 mm. Corolla tube green, bottle-shaped, about 2.2 x 1 mm. Corolla lobes cream to brown, triangular, reflexed, about 1 mm long. Staminal filaments about 4-5 mm long, attached to the lower half of the corolla tube. Anthers about 0.9 mm long. Ovary green, about 1-12. x 0.8 mm. Style + stigma about 5 mm long, shortly plumose.

## Fruit

Capsule 2-3 mm long, globose or subconic, glabrous, top half of capsule drops as an operculum, calyx persistent. Seeds minute, 6-10 (-34), angulate, dull black, rugulose, 1-1.7 x 0.8 mm.

## Seedlings

Features not available.

## Distribution and Ecology

An introduced species in NEQ and in south eastern Queensland and southwards to southern Australia. Altitudinal range from near sea level to 720 m. Grows along tracks, roads and openings in rainforest, notophyll vineforest, Eucalypt forest, various types of woodland, wooded grassland and moist places in grassland. Also from throughout Europe, northern and central Asia, introduced all over the world.

## Natural History & Notes

A weed of disturbed places.

Treatment for dysentery in India and for diarrhoea, malaria and earache in southern Africa (Webb 1948).

## RFK Code

4081



Flowers. © Australian Plant Image Index (APII). Photographer: M. Fagg.



Herbarium specimen. © CSIRO

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