

Crassula helmsii (Kirk) Cockayne

Fam: Crassulaceae

Australian swamp stonecrop, New Zealand pigmyweed

Synonyms : *Tillaea helmsii* Kirk, *T. recurva* (Hook.f.) Hook.f., *Bullardia recurva* Hook.f., *Crassula recurva* (Hook.f.) Ostenf. non N.E. Br.

Ecology : Australian swamp stonecrop forms dense mats of vegetation on banks and in shallow water. Australian swamp stonecrop has a very wide ecological amplitude and occurs, unlike other invasive aquatic plants, in nutrient-poor conditions. The species is evergreen. It is dispersed by small fragments and turions. In the Netherlands Australian swamp stonecrop is found mainly in pools and fens.

Threat : Australian swamp stonecrop can form a very dense mat of vegetation on banks and in nutrient-poor watercourses. This seriously reduces abundance of indigenous flora and fauna. The plant requires only a very small fragment to reproduce, and grows very rapidly.

Control : Remove plants as completely as possible. Tiny fragments can re-grow on bare soil created by eradication measures. Avoid fragmentation and ensure monitoring of treated areas. Digging up the plant and coverage with light-blocking cloth for one year helps reducing waste removal problems. Material and shoes should be thoroughly cleaned after being in an area infested with this plant to avoid further spread.

Identification / similar species : Australian swamp stonecrop is similar to pearlwort (*Sagina* spp.) and water-starwort (*Callitriche* spp.). The stem of this plant is usually white to red and the flower has 4 corolla leaves (pearlwort 5, rarely 4; water-starwort with tiny flowers without corolla leaves).

