Petasites fragrans

Scientific Name

*Petasites fragrans* (Vill.) C. Presl

Synonyms

*Tussilago fragrans* Vill.

Family

Asteraceae (Queensland, New South Wales, the ACT, Victoria, Tasmania, Western Australia and the Northern Territory)

Compositae (South Australia)

Common Names

Italian tussilage, sweet coltsfoot, sweet-scented coltsfoot, winter heliotrope

Origin

Native to northern Africa (i.e. northern Algeria and Tunisia) and Italy (including Sardinia and Sicily).

Naturalised Distribution

Naturalised in the cooler temperate regions of south-eastern Australia (i.e. in Tasmania and southern Victoria).

Also naturalised overseas in the UK and New Zealand.

Notes

Winter heliotrope (*Petasites fragrans*) is regarded as an environmental weed in Victoria and as a potential environmental weed or “sleeper weed” in other parts of southern Australia. It forms a dense groundcover of large leaves that block light from reaching the ground beneath them, effectively suppressing any potentially competitive plant growth.

This species has invaded damp and/or wet sclerophyll forests in Victoria and is seen as a serious threat to one or more vegetation formations in this state. It is also relatively common in wet gullies in Tasmania.
young plant (Photo: Sheldon Navie)