

## Coltsfoot (*Tussilago farfara*)



*Leaves can be large, up to 20 cm across*

Coltsfoot is a perennial, mat forming herb that grows up to 20cm high. It prefers free draining, damp areas such as creek beds but also grows in heavier soils, on stream margins, and in loose gravel.

The plant has long creeping rhizomes and produces large, leathery leaves, up to 20 cm across, and finely toothed at the margins. The top of the leaf is smooth and green while the underside is covered in greyish-white woolly hairs. In early spring, the daisy-like yellow flowers appear singly at the top of the flower stalk before the leaves start to grow. The plant produces small, brown, one-seeded fruit attached to a dandelion-like parachute of hairs.

Spread is by wind dispersal of seed, or seed carried in clothing or animal hair or wool. Rhizome fragments could be spread by farm machinery.

**Coltsfoot is extremely rare in New Zealand, but has the potential to become a very serious problem. If you think you have found a plant, contact your Regional Council immediately.**