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Plant of the month: Kidney-weed *Dichondra repens*



Dichondra repens is a prostrate spreading herb, rooting at the nodes, that is a common and widespread native ground cover at Venus Bay. The leaves are downy and kidney-shaped (hence the name Kidney-weed), 5-25 mm long and slightly wider, with a heart-shaped (cordate) base and a stem to 50 mm long. The tiny, pale, inconspicuous flowers occur from spring to summer and are followed by a two-lobed capsule. It is found in all Australian states.



Kidney-weed likes well-drained soils, prefers some to full shade and is tolerant of light frosts. It can be used as a matting lawn substitute in areas of light traffic. Propagation is from seed or division of suckers.

Dichondra belongs in the Convolvulaceae or Morning Glory family. The genus name *Dichondra* is from the Greek; *dis*, double and *chondros*, grain, referring to the two-lobed seed capsule. The species name *repens* is from the Latin for creeping, as in the habit of the plant.

Photos: Lorraine Norden.