

Acaena magellanica

COMMON NAMES

bidibid, piripiri, greater burnet, buzzy burr

BIOSTATUS

Native – Endemic taxon

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2023 | Not Assessed

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CATEGORY

Vascular

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Herbs - Dicotyledons other than Composites

SIMPLIFIED DESCRIPTION

An evergreen sparsely hairy bluey/grey-green herb, which may spread over 10 metres across and about 15cm in height. The odd-pinnate leaves are bluntly toothed, with pink margins. The globe shaped red flower balls are held on a red stem and grow into a cluster of barbed spikes, which when ripe brown off, become firm and may stick to your socks or laces when brushed past in order to disperse.

FLOWER COLOURS

Red/Pink, Purple, Violet/Purple

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Stoloniferous, trailing perennial herb, prostrate stems 2-4 mm in diameter, forming a loose mat up to 10's of metres in diameter. **Stems** up to 2 mm diameter, glabrous, up to 40 cm long, and/or 14-15 cm high; **Stipules** entire or bifid or trifid; **Leaves** odd-pinnate, between 20-120 mm long with 11-17 leaflets; **Leaflets** reduce gradually towards stem, oblong or obovate, serrated sharp toothed margin, 5-9 teeth per leaflet minutely hair-tipped or not, bluey/grey-green on upper surface paler below, teeth discoloured to pink or maroon, upper surface sparse hairs or glabrous, lower surface with fine shaggy hairs; **Inflorescence scape** 30-100 mm in flower, up to 210 mm when fruiting, red, glabrous or fine hairs; **Capitulum** of about 80-100 florets, each floret has 4-5 sepals, 2-4 stamen, dark red or purple/black anthers, 1 dark red style, 1 achene; **Fruit** roughly cone-shaped, each having 4 barb-tipped spines, up to 8 mm long, which mature dry, pale brown when ripe, tiny spines occasionally occur in between foremost spines.

SIMILAR TAXA

A native of Macquarie Island, not likely to be seen growing in New Zealand. On Macquarie Island it has been seen growing aside *A. minor* var. *antarctica* (the only other local *Acaena* species present), from which it can easily be distinguished by foliage colour, being bluey-grey/green compared to the light green of *A. minor* var. *antarctica*.

DISTRIBUTION

Macquarie Island native with the New Zealand Botanical Region. Also found in **South America, Falkland Islands**, also other **Sub-Antarctic Islands**.

HABITAT

Gravel, herbfield and fellfield.



Macquarie Island. Photographer: Jane Gosden, Date taken: 03/01/2016, Licence: CC BY-NC.



Macquarie Island. Photographer: Jane Gosden, Date taken: 01/01/2016, Licence: CC BY-NC.

THREATS

This is a Macquarie Island endemic and occurs in the New Zealand Botanical Region but it is not encompassed by the New Zealand threat classification process as Macquarie is under the management of Australia.

Cats, rats, mice and rabbits introduced by sealers in the early 1800s posed a significant threat to species endemic to Macquarie Island and when cats were initially eradicated nearly a century later there was an explosion in rabbit numbers. Further efforts were made to remove rodents by the Australian Government and in 2014 Macquarie was declared pest free.

GENUS

Acaena

FAMILY

Rosaceae

AUTHORITY

Acaena magellanica (Lam.) M.Vahl

SYNONYMS

Acaena acroglochis Bitter, *Acaena acutifida* Bitter, *Acaena adscendens* Vahl, *Acaena adscendens* subsp. *cardiostemon* Bitter, *Acaena adscendens* subsp. *georgiae-australis* Bitter, *Acaena adscendens* var. *glabriscapa* Bitter, *Acaena adscendens* var. *incisa* Bitter, *Acaena adscendens* var. *luxurians* Bitter, *Acaena adscendens* var. *macrochaeta* Franch, *Acaena adscendens* var. *majuscula* Bitter, *Acaena adscendens* var. *minuscula* Bitter, *Acaena adscendens* var. *pilosiscapa* Bitter, *Acaena adscendens* var. *semperpilosa* Bitter, *Acaena adscendens* var. *utrinqueglabrescens* Bitter, *Acaena affinis* Hook.f., *Acaena alboffii* Macloskie, *Acaena basibullata* Bitter, *Acaena brachyglochis* Bitter, *Acaena cadilla* Hook.f., *Acaena cadilla* f. *epistemonocoma* Bitter, *Acaena cadilla* f. *pusilla* Bitter, *Acaena calvivagina* Bitter, *Acaena canescens* Phil., *Acaena chamacaena* Bitter, *Acaena closiana* Gay, *Acaena colchaguensis* Bitter, *Acaena compacta* Hauman, *Acaena coxi* Phil., *Acaena decumbens* (G.Forst. ex Gaertn.) D.W.H.Walton, *Acaena depauperata* Bitter, *Acaena deserticola* Phil., *Acaena exaltata* Bitter, *Acaena floribunda* Bitter, *Acaena glandulifera* Bitter, *Acaena glandulifera* subsp. *nordenskjoldii* Bitter, *Acaena glaucella* Bitter, *Acaena glaucophylla* Bitter, *Acaena grahamiana* Gillies ex Walp. *Acaena grandistipula* Bitter, *Acaena grossifolia* Bitter, *Acaena hirta* Citerne, *Acaena humilis* Bitter, *Acaena insularis* Citerne, *Acaena ischnostemon* Bitter, *Acaena krausei* Phil., *Acaena krausei* subvar. *glabratula* Bitter, *Acaena krausei* var. *massonandra* Bitter, *Acaena krausei* var. *meionandra* Bitter, *Acaena krausei* subvar. *pilosior* Bitter. *Acaena laevigata* Reiche, *Acaena laevigata* W.T.Aiton, *Acaena laevigata* var. *venulosa* (Griseb.) Reiche, *Acaena longiaristata* H.Ross, *Acaena longisepala* Bitter, *Acaena longistipula* Bitter, *Acaena macrophytes* Bitter, *Acaena macropoda* Bitter, *Acaena macrostemon* Hook.f., *Acaena macrostemon* subsp. *barbaticupula* Bitter, *Acaena macrostemon* var. *basipilosa* Bitter, *Acaena macrostemon* subsp. *closiana* (Gay) Bitter, *Acaena macrostemon* subsp. *latisepala* Bitter, *Acaena macrostemon* subsp. *longiaristata* (H.Ross) Bitter, *Acaena macrostemon* subsp. *longiplumosa* Bitter, *Acaena macrostemon* subsp. *pachystigma* Bitter, *Acaena macrostemon* subsp. *spectabilis* Bitter, *Acaena macrostemon* var. *supraconica* Bitter, *Acaena magellanica* var. *glabrescens* Bitter, *Acaena magellanica* subsp. *grandiscapa* Bitter, *Acaena magellanica* subsp. *laevigata* (Aiton) Bitter, *Acaena magellanica* var. *laevigata* (Aiton) Citerne, *Acaena magellanica* var. *pubescens* Bitter, *Acaena magellanica* subsp. *pygmaea* Bitter, *Acaena magellanica* f. *robusta* Bitter, *Acaena magellanica* var. *subtuspilosa* Bitter, *Acaena magellanica* subsp. *venulosa* (Griseb.) Bitter, *Acaena magellanica* var. *venulosa* (Griseb.) Citerne, *Acaena molliuscula* Bitter, *Acaena neglecta* Bitter, *Acaena novemdentata* Bitter, *Acaena nudicaulis* Albov, *Acaena obtusiloba* Bitter, *Acaena oligodonta* Bitter, *Acaena oligoglochis* Bitter, *Acaena oligoglochis* var. *dolichoglochis* Bitter, *Acaena oligomera* Skottsbo., *Acaena ovalifolia* var. *cadilla* (Hook.f.) Reiche, *Acaena petiolulata* Phil., *Acaena philippii* Gand., *Acaena plioglochis* Bitter, *Acaena rubescens* Bitter, *Acaena sericascens* Bitter, *Acaena sericascens* var. *novemjuga* Bitter, *Acaena sericascens* var. *sexjuga* Bitter, *Acaena sericascens* var. *tenuibracteolata* Bitter, *Acaena subflaccida* Bitter, *Acaena subtusvillosula* Bitter, *Acaena tomentella* Bitter, *Acaena transitoria* Bitter, *Acaena trifida* var. *brachyphylla* Bitter, *Acaena triglochis* Bitter, *Acaena venulosa* Griseb. in Abh., *Ancistrum adscendens* (Vahl) Poir, *Ancistrum decumbens* G.Forst. ex Gaertn, *Ancistrum humile* Pers., *Ancistrum laevigatum* Lag., *Ancistrum magellanicum* var. *humile* Pers. *Poterium humile* Lam.

ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes

ENDEMIC GENUS

No

ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

FLOWERING

September-February.

FRUITING

November-May.

LIFE CYCLE AND DISPERSAL

Spiny hypanthia are dispersed by attaching to fur, feathers and clothing and possibly also dispersed by wind and granivory (Thorsen et al., 2009)

ETYMOLOGY

acaena: From the Greek 'akanthos' thorn, referring to the spiny calyx that many species have

magellanica: Named after the Magellan Straits in southern South America

CHROMOSOME NUMBER

2n = 42

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2017 | Not Evaluated

2012 | Not Evaluated

2009 | Not Threatened

2004 | Not Threatened

[Jump to current conservation status](#)

REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

Allan HH. 1961. Flora of New Zealand. Volume 1. Indigenous Tracheophyta: Psilopsida, Lycopsidea, Filicopsida, Gymnospermae, Dicotyledons. Government Printer, Wellington, NZ. Page 359.

Lloyd K. 2001. A Key and notes for *Acaena* (Rosaceae) in New Zealand. Botanical Society of Otago Newsletter 25. Pgs. 10-14.

Marticorena A. 2006. REVISIÓN DEL GÉNERO ACAENA (ROSACEAE) EN CHILE1. *Annals of the Missouri Botanical Garden*, 93(3): pp.412-454.

Marticorena AE, Cavieres LA. 2000. *Acaena magellanica* (Lam.) Vahl (Rosaceae). *Gayana. Botánica*, 57(1): pp.107-113.

Thorsen, M. J.; Dickinson, K. J. M.; Seddon, P. J. 2009. Seed dispersal systems in the New Zealand flora. *Perspectives in Plant Ecology, Evolution and Systematics* 2009 Vol. 11 No. 4 pp. 285-309

ATTRIBUTION

Fact sheet prepared for NZPCN by MD Ward (August 29th 2025). Description adapted from Lloyd (2001), Allan (1961).

MORE INFORMATION

<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/acaena-magellanica/>

PDF DATE

27 May 2026