

Aristotelia fruticosa

COMMON NAMES

mountain wineberry

BIOSTATUS

Native – Endemic taxon

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2023 | Not Threatened

[Jump to previous conservation statuses](#)

CATEGORY

Vascular

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Trees & Shrubs - Dicotyledons

SIMPLIFIED DESCRIPTION

A small-leaved shrub with hairy branchlets and veins evident on the underside of leaves.

FLOWER COLOURS

Red/Pink, White

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Dioecious, variable, much branched erect or low growing shrub, sometimes spiny, to 2 m tall; trunk and branches sub-divaricate to upright, rigid, sometimes entangled; bark reddish brown; branchlets reddish brown, pubescent. **Leaves** opposite or in opposite fascicles on arrested branchlets; petioles c. 2 mm long, widening into lamina; midvein inconspicuous above, midvein and secondary veins obvious below; lamina either 5–7 × 4–5 mm, obovate to oblong, coriaceous, dark green, or c. 15 × 9 mm, ovate to lanceolate, thinner, lighter green, margins distinctly serrate, tip acute to obtuse, base cuneate, undersides pale green.

Juvenile leaves larger, thinner, irregularly lobed and serrate.

Inflorescences inconspicuous, lateral along branchlets. **Flowers** c. 2–3 mm diam., solitary, in opposite pairs or in 3–6 flowered cymes, on short pubescent pedicels 1–2 mm long. **Sepals** 4, oblong, pubescent.

Petals 4, slightly > sepals, with 1–4 crenate teeth, white to light pink to red. **Stamens** 4–6, not projecting beyond corolla, anthers > filaments.

Ovary 2-celled(?), styles 2(?). **Fruit** a c. 2(?)–seeded fleshy berry, 3–4 mm diam., pale, white, pink, bright red to black, bitter to taste. **Seed** irregularly angled, ventral surface flattened, elliptic, 2.0–2.6 mm, surface irregular, attachment scar obvious, small orange aril sometimes present.

SIMILAR TAXA

Similar to other small leaved shrub species with veins conspicuous below, particularly *Raukahu anomalous* (which has a flattened, jointed petiole) and *Melicytus micranthus* (which has a pale blotch at the base of the lamina)

DISTRIBUTION

Endemic. North Island, South Island and Stewart Island/Rakiura. Throughout, but often localised in occurrence

HABITAT

Lowland to subalpine forest understory and shrubland, commoner at higher elevations.

GENUS

Aristotelia



Mount Holdsworth, Tararua Forest Park.
Photographer: Jeremy R. Rolfe, Date taken:
09/02/2008, Licence: CC BY.



Cobb Valley. Photographer: Jeremy R. Rolfe,
Date taken: 17/03/2016, Licence: CC BY.

FAMILY

Elaeocarpaceae

AUTHORITY

Aristotelia fruticosa Hook.f.

ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes

ENDEMIC GENUS

No

ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

FLOWERING

October–December

FRUITING

November–April

LIFE CYCLE AND DISPERSAL

Fleshy berries are dispersed by frugivory (Thorsen et al., 2009).

ETYMOLOGY

aristotelia: Named after Aristotle, the Greek philosopher and polymath

fruticosa: Shrubby

NVS CODE

ARIFRU

CHROMOSOME NUMBER

2n = 28

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2017 | Not Threatened

2012 | Not Threatened

2009 | Not Threatened

2004 | Not Threatened

[Jump to current conservation status](#)

REGIONAL CONSERVATION STATUSES

Otago: 2025 | Regionally Not Threatened | Qualifiers: TL Help

The regional threat classification system leverages off the national assessments in the NZTCS, providing information relevant for the regional context. Otago conservation status information is sourced from the "[Conservation Status of Indigenous Vascular Plants in Otago, 2025](#)" Jarvie S et al. (2025) report.

REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

Allan HH. 1961. Flora of New Zealand, Volume I. Indigenous Tracheophyta: Psilopsida, Lycopsida, Filicopsida, Gymnospermae, Dicotyledones. Government Printer, Wellington, NZ. 1085 p.

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Eagle A. 2006. Eagle's complete trees and shrubs of New Zealand. Te Papa Press, Wellington, NZ. 2-volume boxed set: vol. 1 pp 1–529; vol. 2: pp 532–1114.

Thorsen MJ, Dickinson KJM, Seddon PJ. 2009. Seed dispersal systems in the New Zealand flora. *Perspectives in Plant Ecology, Evolution and Systematics* 11: 285–309.

Webb CJ, Simpson MJA. 2001. Seeds of New Zealand Gymnosperms and Dicotyledons. Manuka Press, Christchurch. 428 p.

Wilson HD, Galloway T. 1993. Small-leaved shrubs of New Zealand. Manuka Press, Christchurch, NZ. 305 p.

ATTRIBUTION

Description adapted from Allan 1961, Heenan and de Lange 2006, Eagle 2006 and Webb and Simpson 2001.

NZPCN FACT SHEET CITATION

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MORE INFORMATION

<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/aristotelia-fruticosa/>

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