

Carmichaelia crassicaulis subsp. racemosa

COMMON NAMES

slender coral broom

BIOSTATUS

Native – Endemic taxon

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2023 | Threatened – Nationally Vulnerable | Qualifiers: Sp, DPS, DPT, RF

[Jump to previous conservation statuses](#)

CATEGORY

Vascular

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Trees & Shrubs - Dicotyledons

SIMPLIFIED DESCRIPTION

Rare shrub with erect leafless blunt-tipped grooved branches. Branches 5mm in diameter, oval in cross section, grooves filled with white fuzz.

Flowers small, pea-like, pale pink, streaked with purple. Fruit a small dry hairy pod with a long curved tip and containing 1-3 hard yellow seeds.

FLOWER COLOURS

Cream, Violet/Purple

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Lax, spreading to upright, leafless shrub up to 1.2 m. tall, with few, spreading, rather pliant subcylindric branches. Cladodes slender, wiry, 1.8-4.1 × 1.8-2.1 mm diameter, spreading with ascending tips, yellowish to yellow-brown, or grey, finely grooved. Leaves most present in seedlings and juveniles, absent on adults; lamina simple, obovate, suborbicular or oblong, 4.0-6.0 × 2.0-6.0 mm, upper and lower surfaces puberulent, glabrescent; apex emarginate or retuse; base cuneate; petiole puberulent, c.1.6 mm long. Leaves on cladodes reduced to a papery scale, triangular, glabrous, < 0.3 mm long; apex acute. Inflorescence 1 per node, in 1-6-flowered fascicles. Bracts broadly triangular, 0.4-0.9 mm long, pale green to hyaline, minutely hairy. Pedicel densely hairy, dark grey-green, 0.8-1.2 mm long. Calyx 4 × 3 mm, campanulate to narrowly turbinate; dark green to greenish brown flushed with red, outer surface densely invested in grey felted hairs. Calyx lobes 5, narrowly triangular, dark green flushed with red, 1.0-1.5 mm long, hairy, apex acute. Standard broadly obovate, initially patent, margins strongly recurved, 5-6 × 3-5 mm; centrally blotched purple, otherwise striped purple 10-16 times, margins cream. Wings broadly oblong, ± equal to keel, c.6 × 3 mm, basally blotched purple, purple striped 1-3 times, margins cream. Keel about 6 mm long, incurved, central portion purple, otherwise cream, often faintly striped purple. Stamens 5.5-6.0 mm long. Pistil exerted beyond stamens, 7-8 mm long. Pods ± orbicular to unequally deltoid, compressed, grey-brown to dark grey, outer surface densely covered in grey felted hairs, valves ± indehiscent, 6-8 × 5-8 mm; beak, stout, pungent, 0.6-1.0 mm long.



Carmichaelia crassicaulis subsp. racemosum.
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SIMILAR TAXA

Distinguished from coral broom (*Carmichaelia crassicaulis* subsp. *crassicaulis*) by the lax, spreading rather than stout, erect growth habit, slender, cladodes 1.8-4.1 × 1.8-2.1 mm diameter rather than 4.1-7.8 × 3.2-4.9 mm diameter in subsp. *crassicaulis*. Both subspecies have not been found growing together.

DISTRIBUTION

Endemic. South Island (Canterbury (Mt Somers, Rangitata) Otago (Lindis Pass, western Otago (especially on the mountains around Lake Wakatipu).

HABITAT

Montane to subalpine. Inhabiting sparsely vegetated greywacke and schist rock outcrops, small bluffs, talus slopes and colluvium, also within riparian shrubland.

THREATS

Like the majority of South Island *Carmichaelia* slender coral broom is mostly threatened by the lack of regeneration. Most populations now comprise mature or senescent adults, and it is only in inaccessible sites such as gorges and cliff faces that seedlings and juvenile plants are seen. Slender coral broom is also highly palatable, and is often severely damaged by hares, rabbits, and at times sheep and goats.

GENUS

Carmichaelia

FAMILY

Fabaceae

AUTHORITY

Carmichaelia crassicaulis subsp. *racemosum* (Kirk) Heenan

SYNONYMS

Corallospartium racemosum (Kirk) Ckn. et Allan, *Corallospartium crassicaule* var. *racemosum* Kirk

ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes

ENDEMIC GENUS

No

ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

FLOWERING

December to January

FRUITING

March to May

PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

Can be grown from seed and hardwood cuttings. However, cuttings can be very slow to strike. A slow growing plant suitable for a sunny site. Should be planted free draining soil.

WHERE TO BUY

Not commercially available.

ETYMOLOGY

carmichaelia: After Carmichael, a botanist

racemosa: Raceme bearing

NVS CODE

CARCSR

CHROMOSOME NUMBER

2n = 32

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2017 | Threatened – Nationally Vulnerable | Qualifiers: DP, RF

2012 | Threatened – Nationally Vulnerable | Qualifiers: DP, RF

2009 | Threatened – Nationally Vulnerable | Qualifiers: DP, RF

2004 | Data Deficient

[Jump to current conservation status](#)

REGIONAL CONSERVATION STATUSES

Otago: 2025 | Regionally Threatened – Regionally Vulnerable | Qualifiers: DPR, DPS, NR, NStr, PF, RF, Sp, 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

de Lange, P.J.; Heenan, P.B.; Norton, D.A.; Rolfe, J.R.; Sawyer, J.W.D. 2010: Threatened Plants of New Zealand, Christchurch, Canterbury University Press. 471pp

ATTRIBUTION

Fact Sheet Prepared for NZPCN by: P.J. de Lange 28 October 2009. Description from de Lange et al. (2010).

NZPCN FACT SHEET CITATION

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<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/carmichaelia-crassicaulis-subsp-racemosa/> (Date website was queried)

MORE INFORMATION

<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/carmichaelia-crassicaulis-subsp-racemosa/>

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