

Clematis forsteri

COMMON NAMES

Forster's clematis

BIOSTATUS

Native – Endemic taxon

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2023 | Not Threatened

[Jump to previous conservation statuses](#)

CATEGORY

Vascular

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Lianes & Related Trailing Plants - Dicotyledons

SIMPLIFIED DESCRIPTION

.Cream-flowered vine with variable shaped leaflets in threes

FLOWER COLOURS

Cream, Yellow

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Variable evergreen woody climber; stems to 5 m long, 5-10 mm diam. at base; branchlets grooved, sparsely hairy when young, becoming glabrous. Leaves 3-foliolate, opposite, 3-10(-16) x (3-)4-8(-14) cm; petioles (1-)2-5(-7) cm long, stout, glabrous. Leaflets 14-55 x 9-28, simple to pinnate, simple leaflets lanceolate to deltoid, margins crenate, serrate or deeply pinnatifid to bipinnatifid, apices apiculate, base attenuate to truncate, petiolules 10-60 mm long, grooved, twining, glabrous or sparsely hairy, hairs white, becoming glabrate; midvein and secondary veins visible above, more obvious below; lamina thin to coriaceous, dark green to grey-green, tip acute, base truncate to subcordate, undersides paler. Juvenile leaves larger, thinner. Inflorescences unisexual, conspicuous, of solitary or 2-10-flowered clustered in leaf axils or in dichasial cymes of 5-10 flowers; pedicels 25-95 mm long moderately to densely hairy; inflorescence bracts 3-13(-18) x 1-4(-8), linear to elliptic, acute to obtuse, paired, united, inserted about middle of pedicel, glabrous to moderately hairy. Flowers spicy scented. Male to 4 cm diam., sepals 5-6, narrowly to broadly elliptic, lanceolate or ovate, imbricate, glabrous or sparsely silky hairy above (rarely glabrous above), silky hairy to hairy beneath, 10-25 x 3-13 mm, cream, base often flushed red-brown; stamens 20-37, anthers 2.4-3.5 mm long, filaments glabrous., 3-11 mm long. Female sepals 5-6(-7), similar to male, 13-25 x 3.8-7 mm; Carpels 35-48; staminodes 1-6. Achenes hairy, elliptic, or rarely narrowly elliptic, narrowed to apex, compressed, margin thickened and distinct, surface unornamented or occ. ridged, (2.6-)3.0-4.5(-5.1) mm long, styles (15-)20-35(-40) cm long at fruiting, white-plumose for most of length, glabrous or with short hairs at base.

SIMILAR TAXA

Similar to the white larger-flowered *C. paniculata*. Also similar to both *C. foetida* and *C. cunninghamii*, both of which have brownish hairs on young leaves and elsewhere. Closest to *C. petriei*, from which it can be distinguished by the yellow-green evenly coloured and near-glabrous above sepals and the narrower more pointed floral bracts.

DISTRIBUTION

Endemic. North and South Islands. From Auckland area south to northern Westland and Canterbury.



Waipapa Stream, Wellington south coast.
Photographer: Jeremy R. Rolfe, Date taken:
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Waitetuna Sream, Palliser Bay. Photographer:
Jeremy R. Rolfe, Date taken: 03/10/2009,
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HABITAT

Lowland forest and forest margins, especially forest margins, open spaces and streamsides.

GENUS

Clematis

FAMILY

Ranunculaceae

AUTHORITY

Clematis forsteri J.F.Gmel.

SYNONYMS

Clematis australis var. rutifolia (Hook.f.) Allan; Clematis hexasepala var. rutifolia Hook.f.; Clematis colensoi Hook.f.; Clematis colensoi var. rutifolia (Hook.f.) Hook.f.; Clematis hexapetala L.f.; Clematis hexasepala DC.; Clematis australis Kirk

ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes

ENDEMIC GENUS

No

ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

FLOWERING

September-March

FRUITING

October-April

LIFE CYCLE AND DISPERSAL

Pappate achenes are dispersed by wind (Thorsen et al., 2009).

ETYMOLOGY

clematis: From the Greek klema 'vine', alluding to the vine-like habit of many species

NVS CODE

CLEFOR

CHROMOSOME NUMBER

2n = 16

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2017 | Not Threatened

2012 | Not Threatened

2009 | Not Threatened

2004 | Not Threatened

[Jump to current conservation status](#)

REGIONAL CONSERVATION STATUSES

Auckland: 2025 | Regionally At Risk – Regionally Naturally Uncommon | Qualifiers: DPR, DPS, DPT, RR Help

The regional threat classification system leverages off the national assessments in the NZTCS, providing information relevant for the regional context. Auckland conservation status information is sourced from the "[Conservation status of vascular plant species in Tāmaki Makaurau / Auckland](#)" Simpkins E et al. (2025) report.

REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

Adams, N.M. 1951. *Clematis hexasepala*. *Wellington Botanical Society Bulletin* 51: 23

Anonymous. 1950. *Clematis colensoi*. *Wellington Botanical Society Bulletin* 23: 23

Heenan, P.B; Cartman, J. 2000: Reinstatement of *Clematis petriei* (Ranunculaceae), and typification and variation of *C. forsteri*. *New Zealand Journal of Botany* 38: 575-585.

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* 11: 285-309.

ATTRIBUTION

Fact sheet by M.J. Thorsen. Description adapted from Heenan and Cartman (2000).

MORE INFORMATION

<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/clematis-forsteri/>

PDF DATE

08 June 2026