Clematis quadribracteolata

COMMON NAMES
clematis

BIOSTATUS
Native – Endemic taxon

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS
2023 | At Risk – Naturally Uncommon | Qualifiers: Sp, DPR, DPS, DPT
Jump to previous conservation statuses

CATEGORY
Vascular

STRUCTURAL CLASS
Lianes & Related Trailing Plants - Dicotyledons

SIMPLIFIED DESCRIPTION
Vine with small, entire to three-lobed leaflets and purplish coloured flowers.

FLOWER COLOURS
Red/Pink, Violet/Purple

DETAILED DESCRIPTION
Evergreen slender, low-growing woody climber; branchlets grooved, glabrous or finely puberulent when young. **Leaves** 1.5–3–(4.5) × 0.5–2–(3) cm, simple to 3-foliate, opposite; petioles 1–2.5–(3.5) cm long. **Leaflets** sparsely hairy on petiole and petiolule; petiolules c. 5–10 mm long; midvein and secondary veins inconspicuous above and below; leaflet variable, glabrous above and below, lamina 1–11 mm long, simple, trifid or with basal lobe, broadly spathulate, usually entire, thin, brownish green, tip acute to obtuse, base truncate to subcordate, undersides paler. **Juvenile leaves** larger, thinner. **Inflorescences** unisexual, inconspicuous against foliage, soliatry or in 2–3-flowered clusters in leaf axils, up to 8 cm long; inflorescence bracts elliptic, obtuse to hooded, 2-3 paired, connate, hairy. **Flowers** dull light purple, strongly scented; ♓ to 1 cm diameter, sepals 4, linear-lanceolate, obtuse, imbricate, glabrous above, +/- silky hairy beneath, 5–15 × 1–2 mm, purplish to reddish brown; stamens 25–28, anthers 0.5–1.5 mm long, filaments glabrous., up to 1 cm long; ♓ sepals 4, generally darker and hairier than male, otherwise similar; carpels 22–24; staminodes few. **Achenes** hairy, elliptic, narrowed to apex, compressed, margin thickened and distinct, surface unornamented, (2.2)–2.8–3.5–(3.8) mm long, styles (12)–15–25–(35) cm long at fruiting, white-plumose for most of length, glabrous or with short hairs at base.

SIMILAR TAXA
The wider green hairy sepals (petals are not present in *Clematis* species) distinguish *Clematis marata* from the very similar *C. quadribracteolata*, which has narrow purple sepals that are glabrous on the inner surface. When not in flower they are more difficult to distinguish, but *C. marata* leaflets and branchlets are hairier. The distribution of these two species overlaps throughout eastern South Island.

In cultivation ex eastern Wairarapa. Photographer: Jeremy R. Rolfe, Date taken: 24/08/2008, Licence: CC BY.

In cultivation ex eastern Wairarapa. Photographer: Jeremy R. Rolfe, Date taken: 24/08/2008, Licence: CC BY.

DISTRIBUTION
Endemic. New Zealand: North Island (from Waitomo and the Bay of Plenty south to eastern Wairarapa), South Island (Nelson, Marlborough, Westland, Canterbury, Otago and Southland).
Mainly in the drier east.

HABITAT
Lowland to subalpine. A species favouring grey scrub, frost flats and forest margins.

GENUS
Clematis

FAMILY
Ranunculaceae

AUTHORITY
Clematis quadribracteolata Colenso

TAXONOMIC NOTES
Clematis marata and *C. quadribracteolata* were treated by Allan (1961) as parts of a variable complex. Joe Cartman showed that they are distinct species, and provided descriptions in *Canterbury Botanical Society Journal 20*: 36-37 (1986).

ENDEMIC TAXON
Yes

ENDEMIC GENUS
No

ENDEMIC FAMILY
No

FLOWERING
September–October

FRUITING
November–December

LIFE CYCLE AND DISPERSAL
Pappate achenes are dispersed by wind (Thorsen et al., 2009).

PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE
Easily grown. However, on account of its inconspicuous foliage, and dull-coloured flowers it is not very popular with most gardeners. Best grown up through a divaricating shrub. Like all clematis, this species does best planted in a permanently damp, fertile soil, in a site where its root stock can remain shaded, and its stems can grow up into the sunlight.

WETLAND PLANT INDICATOR STATUS RATING
UPL: Obligate Upland
Rarely is a hydrophyte, almost always in uplands (non-wetlands).

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

NVS CODE
CLEQUA

CHROMOSOME NUMBER
2n = 16

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2017 | At Risk – Naturally Uncommon | Qualifiers: DP, Sp
2012 | Not Threatened
2009 | Not Threatened
2004 | Not Threatened
Jump to current conservation status

REGIONAL CONSERVATION STATUSES

Otago: 2025 | Regionally Threatened – Regionally Critical | Qualifiers: DPR, DPS, DPT, PF, Sp 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.
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. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ppees.2009.06.001.
Webb CJ, Sykes WR, Garnock-Jones PJ. 1988. Flora of New Zealand, Volume IV. Naturalised Pteridophytes, Gymnosperms, Dicotyledons. Botany Division, Department of Scientific and Industrial Research, Christchurch, NZ. 1365 p.
Webb CJ, Simpson MJA. 2001. Seeds of New Zealand Gymnosperms and Dicotyledons. Manuka Press, Christchurch, NZ. 428 p.

ATTRIBUTION

Description adapted from Allan (1961), Webb *et al.* (1988), Eagle (2000), and Webb and Simpson (2001).
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MORE INFORMATION

https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/clematis-quadribracteolata/

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