

# Coprosma arborea

## COMMON NAMES

māmāngi, tree coprosma

## BIOSTATUS

Native – Endemic taxon

## CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2023 | Not Threatened

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## CATEGORY

Vascular

## STRUCTURAL CLASS

Trees & Shrubs - Dicotyledons

## SIMPLIFIED DESCRIPTION

Bushy small tree with pairs of small roundish thin leaves inhabiting the top half of the North Island. Trunk noticeable. Leaves thin, mottled, with small pit at junction of veins, in pairs with a small long-tipped scale between the base of the leaf stems. Fruit white.

## FLOWER COLOURS

Green, Yellow

## DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Tree 8-12 m tall; trunk 200-500 mm diameter; branches rather close-set, suberect to spreading; branchlets slender, pubescent. Petioles winged in upper ½, 8-20 mm long. Stipules short, triangular, connate near base, ciliolate, with prominent denticle. Adult lamina submembranous to subcoriaceous, glabrous, somewhat glossy, 50-80 × 30-48 mm, yellow-green, dark green above, usually mottled maroon or purple, pale wine-red below, ovate to broad-elliptic to oblong, sometimes suborbicular; apex rounded or retuse, sometimes apiculate or mucronulate; cuneately or abruptly narrowed to petiole; margins thickened, indistinctly wavy, often subcrenulate; juvenile lamina 12-30 × 10-18 mm, spatulate, maroon, dark green mottled with maroon, undersides dull wine-red. Reticulations of lamina obscure above, usually distinct below. Male flower in dense glomerules, terminal on main and axillary branches; calyx-teeth linear, obtuse, ciliolate; corolla funnellform, lobes ovoid, acute, more or less = tube. Female flowers in clusters of 2-4; calyx-teeth obtuse, ciliolate; corolla-tube short, lobes long, acute. Drupe fleshy, 6-8 mm long, white, broad-oblong.

## SIMILAR TAXA

The juvenile plant is most likely to be confused with *Coprosma spathulata* subsp. *spathulata* as at this stage both species have spatulate leaves. Juvenile *Coprosma arborea* is most easily distinguished by running ones finger down a young branchlet. In this species the branchlet is smooth while in *C. spathulata* (both subspecies) the branchlet is finely rugose and so imparts a texture not unlike that of a cats tongue.

## DISTRIBUTION

Endemic. New Zealand: Three Kings and North Island, where found from Te Pahi south to near Waitomo in the west and about Gisborne in the East

## HABITAT

Coastal to lower montane forest - but mostly coastal to lowland. Often forming the subcanopy in coastal kauri forest or mixed pohutukawa-hardwood forest. rarely, such as on Waiheke Island, forming a distinct forest type where it dominates the canopy.



Fruit. Photographer: John Smith-Dodsworth, Licence: CC BY-NC.



Tree. Photographer: John Smith-Dodsworth, Licence: CC BY-NC.

## GENUS

Coprosma

## FAMILY

Rubiaceae

## AUTHORITY

Coprosma arborea Kirk

## SYNONYMS

None (first described in 1878)

## ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes

## ENDEMIC GENUS

No

## ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

## FLOWERING

September - December

## FRUITING

January - December

## PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

Easily grown from fresh seed and semi-hardwood cuttings. Often rather slow growing. Does best planted in a moderately fertile, free draining soil in semi-shade, though once established it will tolerate extremely sunny and dry conditions. A beautiful specimen tree.

## ETYMOLOGY

**coprosma:** From the Greek kopros 'dung' and osme 'smell', referring to the foul smell of the species, literally 'dung smell'

**arborea:** From the Latin arbor 'tree', meaning tree-like

## MANAAKI WHENUA ONLINE INTERACTIVE KEY

[Key to Coprosma species of New Zealand](#)

## NVS CODE

COPARB

## CHROMOSOME NUMBER

2n = 44

## 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 Not Threatened | Qualifiers: DPS, DPT 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

Allan, H.H. 1961: Flora of New Zealand. Vol. I, Government Printer, Wellington.

## **ATTRIBUTION**

Fact sheet prepared by Peter J. de Lange (30 August 2004). Description adapted from Allan (1961)  
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## **MORE INFORMATION**

<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/coprosma-arborea/>

## **PDF DATE**

25 May 2026