

# Coprosma cheesemanii

## SYNONYMS

*Coprosma depressa* (Hook. f.) Cheeseman

## FAMILY

Rubiaceae

## AUTHORITY

*Coprosma cheesemanii* W.R.B.Oliv.

## FLORA CATEGORY

Vascular – Native

## ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes

## ENDEMIC GENUS

No

## ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

## STRUCTURAL CLASS

Trees & Shrubs - Dicotyledons

## NVS CODE

COPCHE

## CHROMOSOME NUMBER

2n = 88

## CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2012 | Not Threatened

## PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2009 | Not Threatened

2004 | Not Threatened

## BRIEF DESCRIPTION

Low growing, very small leaved shrub with branches bearing perpendicular short leafy branches giving a flattened appearance inhabiting upland areas. Twigs fuzzy. Leaves glossy, narrow, 8-11mm long, tip pointed, in clusters of pairs, with a line of small hairs between the leaf bases. Fruit orange or reddish.

## DISTRIBUTION

Endemic. North, South and Stewart Islands. Locally from Mount Hikurangi southwards.

## HABITAT

Montane to subalpine 400-1500m, tussock-grassland, shrubland, bog forest, often permanently damp areas.

## FEATURES

Prostrate to sprawling shrub up to 0.5 (-1) m tall. Branches greyish, more or less divaricate, branchlets slender; pubescent. Leaves very shortly petioled. Stipules broadly triangular, obtuse, pubescent to villous, ciliate especially at apex. Lamina coriaceous, glossy, olive-green, linear to narrow-oblong, acute, more or less 8-11 x 1-2 mm, margins usually reddish brown. Midrib alone evident. Flowers solitary, terminal on short branchlets. Male flower without calyx; corolla broadly campanulate; lobes 4-6, acute to subacute, more or less equal to tube. Female Flower with calyx-teeth evident, acute, corolla-tube short, lobes linear more or less reflexed. Drupe orange-red, globose, 6-7 mm diameter.



Tongariro, February. Photographer: John Smith-Dodsworth



Leith Saddle, Dunedin. Photographer: John Barkla

## SIMILAR TAXA

*Coprosma cuneata* has indented tips to the leaves and dark bark on the branchlets.

*C. microcarpa* has small white fruit, abundant leaves that are rather thin and often arranged in flat leafy planes, and dark brown bark.

*C. acerosa* and its close relatives have longer, narrower leaves, and pale blue or white fruit often flecked with darker blue.

*C. fowerakeri* is more densely leafy, with closely clustered, more leathery leaves and orange fruit.

## FLOWERING

December

## FLOWER COLOURS

Green

## FRUITING

January-March

## LIFE CYCLE

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

## ETYMOLOGY

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

**cheesemanii:** Named after Thomas Frederick Cheeseman (1846 - 15 October 1923) who was a New Zealand botanist and naturalist who, in 1906, produced *The Manual of the New Zealand Flora*.

## TAXONOMIC NOTES

Wilson & Galloway (1993) briefly discuss other related spp.: *Coprosma* aff. *cheesemanii* (C. sp. (r) of Eagle 1982) is a prostrate shrub with narrow oblong leaves and orange-red fruit. It is restricted to pans of Nelson and Marlborough where it grows in crevices of marble and on the Mineral Belt ultramafic rocks. *Coprosma* aff. *cheesemanii* (C. sp. (o) of Eagle 1982) is a prostrate or sprawling shrub up to 70 cm tall with distinctly wider leaves than in *C. cheesemanii* proper, with which it grows in the central North Island. It is found in subalpine and alpine shrubland in the central North Island southwards to the southern Ruahine Range. A. P. Druce recognises both of these forms as distinct unnamed species.

## ATTRIBUTION

Description adapted by M. Ward from Allan (1961), Mark (2012), Wilson & Galloway (1993).

## REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

Allan, H. H. 1961. *Flora of New Zealand*. Vol. 1. Wellington: Government Printer. pg. 568, 586-587.

Eagle, A. 1982. *Eagle's trees and shrubs of New Zealand*. Vol. 2. Auckland, Collins.

Mark, A. F. 2012. *Above the Treeline: A Nature Guide to Alpine New Zealand*. Craig Potton Publishing, Nelson. pg. 169.

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.

Wilson, H. D., & Galloway, T. 1993. *Small-leaved shrubs of New Zealand*. Manuka Press. pg. 89-91.

## MORE INFORMATION

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