Coprosma intertexta

BIOSTATUS
Native – Endemic taxon

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS
2023 | At Risk – Declining | Qualifiers: Sp
Jump to previous conservation statuses

CATEGORY
Vascular

STRUCTURAL CLASS
Trees & Shrubs - Dicotyledons

SIMPLIFIED DESCRIPTION
Bushy reddish wide-angled tangled shrub with very small needle-like leaves. Leaves 10mm long, often curved sideways, sometimes with tiny hairs on upper surface (lens needed), margin red. Very small hair-fringed triangular flap on stem between base of leaf pairs. Fruit small, white or pale blue.

Culverden Scientific Reserve, Canterbury. Photographer: Melissa Hutchison, Date taken: 12/10/2013, Licence: CC BY-NC.

FLOWER COLOURS
Green, Yellow

DETAILED DESCRIPTION
Dioecious, erect, somewhat fastigiate, extensively to sparingly branched, suckering shrub forming thickets up to 5 x 5 m. branches and branchlets fastigiate, filiramulate divaricate; branchlets at first finely puberulent becoming glabrous with age; bark initially pale-grey maturing dark brown. Leaves on short brachyblasts or in opposite pairs or near sessile fascicles. Interpetiolar stipules shortly-sheathing, broadly oblong triangular, obtuse with an attentuated apex surmounted by a single, deciduous apical denticle, denticles otherwise 3-6 all deciduous, outer surfaces finely ciliolate, undersides sparingly so, stipular collar-margins chartaceous when dry. Petioles slender 0.5-2 mm long. Leaves 7- 15 x 1-2 mm, darg grey-green to red-brown or purple-green, narrow-oblong to narrowly obovate-oblong, often slightly falcate, subacute, apiculate, margins initially puberulent, reddish; midrib and sometimes secondary veins evident.

Culverden Scientific Reserve, Canterbury. Photographer: Melissa Hutchison, Date taken: 12/10/2013, Licence: CC BY-NC.

SIMILAR TAXA
Most similar to *Coprosma elatirioides* de Lange et A.Markey from which it differs by its upright, non-lianoid shrub habit, much thinner leaves with acute leaf apices, and white translucent fruits (often with dark blue streaks or flecks). The stipules of *C. intertexta* differ from *C. elatirioides* by the sparse or complete absence of hairs on the upper surface, their shortly sheathing nature (<1/4 the height of the whole stipule), by the stipule exceeding the sheath, and by its attenuated apex surmounted by a single terminal deciduous denticle. Either side of the apical denticle on the stipule sheath are 3-6 rather than 1-4 deciduous denticles. Finally the thin stipular collar-margins of *C. intertexta* are distinctly chartaceous rather than coriaceous when dry. *Coprosma elatirioides* is a species of open mesotrophic to oligotrophic wetlands and *C. intertexta*, which is completely allopatric from it, is a species of the drier, eastern intermontane basins where it mainly grows in grey scrub communities.

DISTRIBUTION
Endemic. South Island, eastern from the Saxton River (Marlborough) south to Otago

HABITAT
A species of the Canterbury Plains and eastern South Island dry intermontane basins, where it usually grows in grey scrub overlying old moraines, coarse alluvium, boulder piles and or rock outcrops.

THREATS
A local endemic with a naturally sparse distribution, perhaps most common in the inland basins of Canterbury and Otago.

GENUS
Coprosma

FAMILY
Rubiaceae

AUTHORITY
Coprosma intertexta G.Simpson

SYNONYMS
None

ENDEMIC TAXON
Yes

ENDEMIC GENUS
No

ENDEMIC FAMILY
No

FLOWERING
October - February

FRUITING
July - December

LIFE CYCLE AND DISPERSAL
Fleshy drupes are dispersed by frugivory (Thorsen et al., 2009).

PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE
Easy from fresh seed, semi-hardwood cuttings and rooted pieces (this species suckers)

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

PLANT OF THE MONTH
This plant has been featured as a Plant of the Month – see Trilepidea: NZPCN newsletter for August 2009 for the full story.

ETYMOLOGY
coprosma: From the Greek kopros ‘dung’ and osme ‘smell’, referring to the foul smell of the species, literally ‘dung smell’
intertexta: Intertwined

MANAAKI WHENUA ONLINE INTERACTIVE KEY
Key to Coprosma species of New Zealand

NVS CODE
COPINT

CHROMOSOME NUMBER
2n = 44

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2017 | At Risk – Declining | Qualifiers: DP, Sp
2012 | At Risk – Declining | Qualifiers: DP, Sp
2009 | At Risk – Relict | Qualifiers: De, DP, RF, Sp
2004 | Sparse
Jump to current conservation status

REGIONAL CONSERVATION STATUSES

Otago: 2025 | Regionally Threatened – Regionally Vulnerable | Qualifiers: DPS, DPT, 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

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 prepared by P.J. de Lange for NZPCN (1 June 2013)

NZPCN FACT SHEET CITATION

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MORE INFORMATION

https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/coprosma-intertexta/

PDF DATE

25 May 2026