

Coprosma robusta

COMMON NAME

Karamu, glossy karamu

SYNONYMS

?*Coprosma coffaeoides* Colenso

FAMILY

Rubiaceae

AUTHORITY

Coprosma robusta Raoul

FLORA CATEGORY

Vascular – Native

ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes

ENDEMIC GENUS

No

ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Trees & Shrubs - Dicotyledons

NVS CODE

COPROB

CHROMOSOME NUMBER

2n = 44

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2012 | Not Threatened

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2009 | Not Threatened

2004 | Not Threatened

BRIEF DESCRIPTION

Large bushy shrub with pairs of glossy leaves which have a small dark-tipped flap on the stem between the leaf bases. Leaves 7-12cm long, with a prominent ridge up the middle underneath and a furrow up the middle above. Fruit red, in tight clusters along twigs.

DISTRIBUTION

Endemic. North and South Islands. Naturalised on the Chatham Islands within a small area between Waitangi and Owenga.

HABITAT

Common throughout coastal, lowland and lower montane habitats within shrublands and open sites within forest.



Boulder Hill, Lower Hutt. Photographer: Jeremy Rolfe



Boulder Hill, Lower Hutt. Photographer: Jeremy Rolfe

FEATURES

Shrub or small tree up to 6 m tall. Branches numerous, stout, erect to somewhat spreading. Petioles stout, 10-20 mm long. Stipules fused towards base, obtuse, glabrous with one of two prominent, black, glandular denticles. Leaves 70-120 x 30-40-50 mm, leathery, dark green above, paler green beneath, glabrous, elliptic, elliptic-oblong to broad-ovate, acute or obtuse, apex mucronate. Venation reticulated, conspicuous. Male flowers in axillary many-flowered glomerules, corolla conspicuous, lobes triangular, acute, stamens 4-5, prominent. Females in compound clusters on peduncles 10-15 mm. Calyx and corolla much reduced, stigmas prominent. Drupe dark orange (rarely yellow), 8-8 x 4-5 mm, oblong to narrow-ovoid.

SIMILAR TAXA

Easily distinguished from all the other lowland, large-leaved *Coprosma* spp., by the seemingly entire leaves, which are finely toothed along the margins - this can be felt by dragging a finger tips along the leaf edge. Perhaps closest to *Coprosma macrocarpa* subsp. *minor*, with which it freely hybridizes, and from which the more simple leaf venation (not so reticulate), finely toothed leaf margins are useful distinctions.

FLOWERING

(July-) August-September (-November)

FLOWER COLOURS

Green, White

FRUITING

(March-) April-May (-July)

PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

Very easy from fresh seed. Also easy from semi-hardwood cuttings. Fast growing and inclined to become weedy.

ETYMOLOGY

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

robusta: Sturdy

WHERE TO BUY

Not commonly cultivated but often naturalising from urban indigenous vegetation remnants. Fruit bird dispersed. Heavily fruiting females (which are often apomictic) can be very spectacular.

ATTRIBUTION

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

CITATION

Please cite as: de Lange, P.J. (Year at time of access): *Coprosma robusta* Fact Sheet (content continuously updated). New Zealand Plant Conservation Network. <https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/coprosma-robusta/> (Date website was queried)

MORE INFORMATION

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