

Coprosma serrulata

SYNONYMS

None (first described in 1871)

FAMILY

Rubiaceae

AUTHORITY

Coprosma serrulata Hook.f. ex Buchanan

FLORA CATEGORY

Vascular – Native

ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes

ENDEMIC GENUS

No

ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Trees & Shrubs - Dicotyledons

NVS CODE

COPSER

CHROMOSOME NUMBER

2n = 44

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2012 | Not Threatened

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2009 | Not Threatened

2004 | Not Threatened

BRIEF DESCRIPTION

Low growing sprawling shrub with pairs of leathery leaves which have the veins sunken into the upper surface and a finely notched margin (lens needed) inhabiting mountain areas of the South Island. Leaves 4-7cm long, rounded. Several small dark teeth on stem between leaf bases. Fruit red.

DISTRIBUTION

Endemic. South Island: Marlborough and North-west Nelson south

HABITAT

Montane to lower subalpine. Clearings within forest, in shrubland, grassland, herbfield and at the base of talus slopes and screes amongst boulders. Usually found growing amongst other lower growing shrubs and grasses.



Temple basin, May. Photographer: John Smith-Dodsworth



Temple basin, May. Photographer: John Smith-Dodsworth

FEATURES

Erect to depressed bushy shrub up to 1 × 1 m tall; branches very stout though pliant, spreading, with white papery bark falling in flakes; branchlets rather stout, glabrous. Leaves on coriaceous winged petioles 10-15 mm long. Stipules broadly deltoid to subtruncate, glabrescent; denticles prominent 10-12 of more or less equal size, pale green to more or less colourless. Lamina somewhat cartilaginous, thick and coriaceous, 40-70 × 25-40 mm, subrotund to broad-obovate or obovate-oblong; apex rounded to subtruncate, mucronate; dark green, somewhat rugulose above, paler below; margins crenulate-serrulate. Reticulated veins evident on both surfaces. Male flowers several together on very short axillary peduncles; calyx 0; corolla subcampanulate, lobes 4-5, oblong-triangular, acuminate, ciliolate; stamens 4-6. Female flowers solitary on short axillary peduncles; calyx truncate, teeth 2; corolla tubular, lobes narrow-triangular, acute to subacuminate, < tube. Drupe 7-8 mm long, red, broad-oblong.

SIMILAR TAXA

Coprosma serrulata is not likely to be confused with any other *Coprosma* species. The large, thick, leathery leaves with their finely crenulate-serrulate leaf margins are quite unlike any other *Coprosma* species.

FLOWERING

September - October

FLOWER COLOURS

Green

FRUITING

April - July

LIFE CYCLE

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

PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

Easily grown from fresh seed and semi-hardwood cuttings but slow growing and intolerant of warm or humid conditions. Does best in a cool, south facing situation planted amongst rocks in a deep, fertile free draining soil. An attractive species that is sadly not often seen in cultivation

ETYMOLOGY

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

serrulata: Rough edged

WHERE TO BUY

Occasionally offered by specialist native plant nurseries.

ATTRIBUTION

Description based on Allan (1961)

REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

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

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

MORE INFORMATION

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