

# Coprosma spathulata subsp. hikuruana

## BIOSTATUS

Native – Endemic taxon

## CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2023 | At Risk – Naturally Uncommon | Qualifiers: OL

[Jump to previous conservation statuses](#)

## CATEGORY

Vascular

## STRUCTURAL CLASS

Trees & Shrubs - Dicotyledons

## SIMPLIFIED DESCRIPTION

Low-growing sprawling shrub with long flexible twigs bearing pairs of small round leaves with a narrow long (to 23mm long) dark leaf stalk inhabiting the northern tip of the North Island. Fruit dark violet.

## FLOWER COLOURS

Green, Red/Pink

## DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Prostrate, evergreen, dioecious trailing shrub producing numerous spreading, long-trailing branches up to 10 m long; these sometimes rooting at leaf nodes. Main stem usually solitary, prostrate; branches sparse to numerous, leafy. Leaves opposite, spathulate; petioles up to 23 mm, stout, winged; lamina 6-15 x 8-15 mm, dull red-brown, mottled dark green, yellow or white with darker veins, flat, spreading, orbicular to broad oblong, coriaceous, apex retuse to emarginate sometimes obcordate; domatia 2-6 or absent. Stipules 0.8-0.9 mm, narrowly triangular, pubescent with a single dark central denticle. Flowers axillary, solitary or paired, in axils of uppermost leaves. Male flowers maroon or green streaked maroon. Corolla 5-6 mm; tube 1.5-2 mm, elliptic; lobes 3-4, lanceolate to ovate-elliptic. Stamens 2-4. Female flowers similar, with smaller obovoid corolla, lobes 2-4, linear-lanceolate. Stigmas 2. Drupes ellipsoid, 5-9 x 2-4.5 mm, dull violet-black.

## SIMILAR TAXA

*Coprosma spathulata* subsp. *hikuruana* is very close to *C. spathulata* subsp. *spathulata*. However that subspecies is an upright shrub of forested habitats whose fruits are globose, dull black, orange or red. It has never been found growing on ultramafic rocks. On the Surville Cliffs *C. spathulata* subsp. *hikuruana* could be confused with *Coprosma neglecta*, but that species never has long trailing stems up to 10 m long, nor spathulate leaves, and it always has globose red fruits.

## DISTRIBUTION

Endemic. North Island, where it is known only from the 120 ha exposure of ultramafic rocks at the North Cape Scientific Reserve, Surville Cliffs.

## HABITAT

Coastal cliffs. Restricted to ultramafic Rock and soils in shaded sites, under rock overhangs and creeping beneath low scrub.

## THREATS

Threatened by the small numbers of plants known from the wild (< 200), on going weed invasion of the ultramafic rocks and soils, browsing animals (possums, horses, pigs and cattle), and potentially by fires.



*Coprosma spathulata* subsp. *hikuruana* in the wild at Surville in September. Photographer: John Smith-Dodsworth, Licence: CC BY-NC.



*Coprosma spathulata* subsp. *hikuruana* plant in the wild at the Surville Cliffs. Photographer: John Smith-Dodsworth, Licence: CC BY-NC.

## GENUS

Coprosma

## FAMILY

Rubiaceae

## AUTHORITY

*Coprosma spathulata* subsp. *hikuruana* de Lange et Heenan

## SYNONYMS

None

## ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes

## ENDEMIC GENUS

No

## ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

## FLOWERING

July - October

## FRUITING

January

## PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

Although it can be grown from seed, semi-hardwood cuttings or layered pieces it is very slow, and fruits produced by cultivated plants may be of hybrid origin, as male and female plants are rarely grown together.

## ETYMOLOGY

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

**spathulata:** Shaped like a flattened spoon (leaves)

## MANAAKI WHENUA ONLINE INTERACTIVE KEY

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

## NVS CODE

COPSSH

## CHROMOSOME NUMBER

2n = 44

## PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2017 | At Risk – Naturally Uncommon | Qualifiers: OL

2012 | At Risk – Naturally Uncommon | Qualifiers: OL

2009 | At Risk – Naturally Uncommon | Qualifiers: CD, HI, OL

2004 | Threatened – Nationally Critical

[Jump to current conservation status](#)

## REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

de Lange, P.J., Heenan, P.B. 2001: A new *Coprosma* (Rubiaceae) from the Surville Cliffs, North Cape, New Zealand. [\*New Zealand Journal of Botany\* 39: 217-223.](#)

## ATTRIBUTION

Fact sheet prepared for NZPCN by P.J. de Lange 1 July 2005. Description adapted from de Lange & Heenan (2001).

### **NZPCN FACT SHEET CITATION**

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<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/coprosma-spathulata-subsp-hikuruana/> (Date website was queried)

### **MORE INFORMATION**

<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/coprosma-spathulata-subsp-hikuruana/>

### **PDF DATE**

25 May 2026