

# Coprosma wallii

## SYNONYMS

None

## FAMILY

Rubiaceae

## AUTHORITY

*Coprosma wallii* Petrie

## FLORA CATEGORY

Vascular – Native

## ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes

## ENDEMIC GENUS

No

## ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

## STRUCTURAL CLASS

Trees & Shrubs - Dicotyledons

## NVS CODE

COPWAL

## CHROMOSOME NUMBER

2n = 132

## CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2012 | At Risk – Declining | Qualifiers: CD, RF

## PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2009 | At Risk – Declining | Qualifiers: CD, RF

2004 | Gradual Decline

## BRIEF DESCRIPTION

Bushy dark green shrub or small tree with orange under-bark and many very wide-angled branches bearing groups of pairs of small oval leaves and bulging purple fruit. Leaves 5-10mm long, nearly as wide as long, with a triangular hairy ridge on the fuzzy stem between leaf bases. Seeds nearly round.

## DISTRIBUTION

Endemic. North, South and Stewart Islands. In the North Island, rather local and with a predominantly eastern distribution from the Ripia River Headwaters to Wairarapa, with only two western populations at Erua and Paengaroa In in the South Island much more widespread in both the east and west (with new populations still being discovered mainly in the west and south). On Stewart Island, only recently (2000) discovered and still only known from one location.

## HABITAT

Occupies a range of habitats from seasonally flooded, alluvial forest prone to very cold winters and dry summers, to riparian forest and subalpine scrub, or as a component of grey scrub or mixed Podocarp forest developed on steeply sloping basaltic or andesitic rock. The key feature of the majority of *C. wallii* habitat is that the substrates are rather fertile and the vegetation is limited by frost, water logging, or severe summer drought. Never associated with broad-leaved canopy trees.



In cultivation ex Wairarapa. Photographer: Jeremy Rolfe



In cultivation ex Wairarapa. Photographer: Jeremy Rolfe

## FEATURES

Shrub to small tree (1.8-)2(-3) m. Trunk stout, clad in dark bubbly bark, under bark dark red. Branches stout, erect then spreading, somewhat pagodiform, branchlets stout, subtetragonous, densely clad in short, appressed, antrorse rufous hairs. Petioles pubescent, c.1 mm. Seedling and juvenile leaves, rhomboid to ovate-oblong, densely clad in long, dark, rufous appressed hairs. Adult leaves leathery, glabrous, 5-9 x 5-7 mm, broad-ovate to suborbicular, broadly ovate-oblong, obtuse, subtruncate at base, dark green to green, upper surface very shiny, veins not evident, under sides paler, midrib and secondary veins evident. Flowers 1(-2-3) on short branchlets. Male without calyx, corolla short, broadly campanulate, lobes broad-ovate, acute. Female corolla funnelform, lobes triangular, acute, Drupe ovoid, didymous, 3 x 4.5 mm, dark violet black to black.

## SIMILAR TAXA

Easily recognised through a combination of its tall shrub to small tree habit, dark red under bark, leafy branches bearing numerous rather dark green, shiny, small leaves, and by the dark violet-black strongly twinned (didymous) fruits.

## FLOWERING

No information

## FRUITING

Fruit may be present throughout the year. However, they are most conspicuous between March and May

## LIFE CYCLE

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

## PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

Easy from fresh seed. Can be grown from semi-hardwood cuttings. Quite fast growing, doing best in fertile, moist alluvial soils but once established remarkably tolerant of a wide variety of soils and moisture regimes.

## THREATS

Although not as threatened as once believed, several North and South Island populations are in vulnerable habitats or persist as remnant stands within rough pasture and/or along roadsides. In these sites recruitment is limiting or absent. Weeds remain a long term threat at virtually all known habitats. As a somewhat cryptic plant it is also vulnerable through the failure to recognise it. Some populations on track sides and near popular scenic attractions have been damaged by track maintenance and in one site the erection of a toilet block.

## ETYMOLOGY

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

## WHERE TO BUY

Not commercially available.

## ATTRIBUTION

Fact Sheet prepared for NZPCN by P.J. de Lange 1 August 2003. Description based on Allan (1961).

## REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

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

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

## NZPCN FACT SHEET CITATION

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

## MORE INFORMATION

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