

Cornus capitata

COMMON NAMES

Strawberry dogwood

BIOSTATUS

Exotic

CONSERVATION STATUS

Not applicable

CATEGORY

Vascular

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Trees & Shrubs - Dicotyledons

FLOWER COLOURS

Yellow

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Small evergreen tree to about 6 m high. Stems hairy when young, becoming glabrous. Leaves opposite, to about 10 cm long on short petiole. Numerous pale yellow flowers. Fruit almost round 2-4 cm diameter, ripening to red.

SIMILAR TAXA

Is often mistaken for *Arbutus unedo* (strawberry tree) but is easily distinguished as *C. capitata* has opposite leaves lacking teeth, and the fruit is not spiky.

HABITAT

Terrestrial.

GENUS

Cornus

FAMILY

Cornaceae

AUTHORITY

Cornus capitata Wall. ex Roxb.

SYNONYMS

Dendrobenthamia capitata

FLOWERING

December, January

FRUITING

March, April

YEAR NATURALISED

1922

ORIGIN

Himalayas to W. China

REASON FOR INTRODUCTION

Ornamental



Dendrobenthamia capitata. Photographer: John Smith-Dodsworth, Licence: CC BY-NC.



Dendrobenthamia capitata. Photographer: Graeme La Cock, Licence: CC BY-NC.

ETYMOLOGY

capitata: From the Latin capitus 'head', with a knob-like head or tip

ENVIRONMENTAL WEED (2024)

This plant is named in a list of 386 environmental weeds in New Zealand 2024 prepared by DOC. 759 candidate species were considered for inclusion on this new comprehensive list of environmental weeds in New Zealand. The species considered were drawn from published lists of weed species, lists of plants that must be reported or managed by law if observed, existing national and regional programmes and agreements for pest management, and species already managed by the Department of Conservation (DOC). Candidate species were then assessed to see if they were fully naturalised and whether they have more than minor impacts in natural ecosystems. Read the full report [here](#).

MORE INFORMATION

<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/cornus-capitata/>

PDF DATE

25 May 2026