Corokia cotoneaster

COMMON NAMES
korokio, wire-nettting bush

BIOSTATUS
Native – Endemic taxon

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS
2023 | Not Threatened
Jump to previous conservation statuses

CATEGORY
Vascular

STRUCTURAL CLASS
Trees & Shrubs - Dicotyledons

SIMPLIFIED DESCRIPTION
Common variable shrub with zig-zag thin grey twigs bearing clusters of small leaves that are white underneath with a dented or rounded tip and on a dark flattened leaf stalk. Flowers yellow, star-shaped. Fruit red.

Close up of leaves and fruit. Photographer: Wayne Bennett, Licence: CC BY-NC.

FLOWER COLOURS
Yellow

DETAILED DESCRIPTION
Much-branched shrub up to 3 m or more tall. Branchlets rigid, divaricate; bark dark, rough. Leaves of seedlings obovate-spathulate, often elongate and 3-lobed. Leaves of adults varying in size according to exposure, alternate or in alternate fascicles, obovate-cuneate to obovate-oblong to suborbicular, obtuse, emarginate or not; lamina dark or coppery green above, silvery white beneath, 2-15 x 2-10 mm, on flattened petiole up to 20 mm long. Flowers axillary and terminal, solitary or in fascicles of 2-4; 5-8 mm diameter, numerous per plant. Calyx-segments 1-1.5 mm long, ovate-triangular, pubescent on backs; petals bright yellow, usually 5, approximately 4-5 mm long, narrow oblong-ovate, acute to subacute, pubescent on backs. Drupes red or orange or yellow, 5-8 mm long.

Great Barrier Island. Photographer: John Sawyer, Licence: CC BY-NC.

SIMILAR TAXA
Helichrysum lanceolatum can closely resemble *Corokia* in the absence of flowers or fruit. *Helichrysum* lacks the distinctive zigzagging of stiff, dark branchlets, and has paler green, duller, thinner leaves with pointed rather than blunt or indented tips.
Olearia odorata has opposite leaves or leaf clusters and fluffy seeds.
Olearia capillaris has wavy or crinkle-cut edges to the leaves, fawn, peeling bark, and fluffy seeds.
Olearia polita has opposite leaves or leaf clusters, two ridges (lens helpful) along the young branchlets, and fluffy seeds.

DISTRIBUTION
North, South and Three Kings Islands.

HABITAT
Lowland shrubland, river-flats and rocky places throughout.

GENUS
Corokia

FAMILY
Argophyllaceae

AUTHORITY
Corokia cotoneaster Raoul

TAXONOMIC NOTES
Corokia is a small genus of three species occurring naturally only in New Zealand. *C. cotoneaster* hybridises with the larger leaved *C. buddleioides* where the two species grow together, and some of the hybrid forms are popular as garden plants.

ENDEMIC TAXON
Yes

ENDEMIC GENUS
No

ENDEMIC FAMILY
No

FLOWERING
(September-) October-December (-April)

FRUITING
February-May (-September)

LIFE CYCLE AND DISPERSAL
Fleshy drupes are dispersed by frugivory (Thorsen et al., 2009).

WETLAND PLANT INDICATOR STATUS RATING
UPL: Obligate Upland
Rarely is a hydrophyte, almost always in uplands (non-wetlands).

ETYMOLOGY
corokia: From the Maori name korokio or korokia-tarango
cotoneaster: from Latin cotneum, meaning 'quince', and the suffix -aster meaning 'imperfectly resembling'.

NVS CODE
CORCOT

CHROMOSOME NUMBER
2n = 18

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES
2017 | Not Threatened
2012 | Not Threatened
2009 | Not Threatened
2004 | Not Threatened
Jump to current conservation status

REGIONAL CONSERVATION STATUSES
Auckland: 2025 | Regionally Threatened – Regionally Vulnerable | Qualifiers: DPS, DPT, PF, RF Help
The regional threat classification system leverages off the national assessments in the NZTCS, providing information relevant for the regional context. Auckland conservation status information is sourced from the "Conservation status of vascular plant species in Tāmaki Makaurau / Auckland" Simpkins E et al. (2025) report.
Otago: 2025 | Regionally Not Threatened Help
The regional threat classification system leverages off the national assessments in the NZTCS, providing information relevant for the regional context. Otago conservation status information is sourced from the "Conservation Status of Indigenous Vascular Plants in Otago, 2025" Jarvie S et al. (2025) report.

REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

Allan HH. 1961. Flora of New Zealand, Volume I. Indigenous Tracheophyta: Psilopsida, Lycopsida, Filicopsida, Gymnospermae, Dicotyledones. Government Printer, Wellington, NZ. 1085 p.
Moorfield, J. C. (2005). Te aka : Maori-English, English-Maori dictionary and index. Pearson Longman: Auckland, N.Z.
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.
Wilson, H. D., & Galloway, T. 1993. Small-leaved shrubs of New Zealand. Manuka Press. pg. 182-184.

ATTRIBUTION

Description adapted by M. Ward from Allan (1961) and Wilson & Galloway (1993).
Some of this factsheet information is derived from Flora of New Zealand Online and is used under a Creative Commons Attribution 3.0 New Zealand licence.

MORE INFORMATION

https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/corokia-cotoneaster/

PDF DATE

07 June 2026