

Crassula mataikona



SYNONYMS

Tillaea debilis Colenso ex Hook.f.

FAMILY

Crassulaceae

AUTHORITY

Crassula mataikona A.P.Druce

FLORA CATEGORY

Vascular – Native

ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes

ENDEMIC GENUS

No

ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Herbs - Dicotyledons other than Composites

NVS CODE

CRAMAT

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2017 | At Risk – Naturally Uncommon | Qualifiers: DP, Sp

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2012 | At Risk – Naturally Uncommon | Qualifiers: Sp

2009 | At Risk – Naturally Uncommon

2004 | Data Deficient

DISTRIBUTION

Endemic. New Zealand: North Island (Awakino and South Taranaki Coastline, coastal eastern Wairarapa, Aorangi Range, Cape Palliser, and Wellington coastlines), South (Marlborough Sounds, and parts of the eastern South Island coastline as far south as Dunedin, and also known from several sites in inland central Otago). Also reported as a weed in Christchurch and Dunedin bowling greens.

HABITAT

A coastal species of open ground, often amongst Zoysia-dominated turf. It will not tolerate tall vegetation, and requires frequent disturbance to keep the habitats it frequents sparsely-vegetated.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Short-lived succulent, moss-like, herb forming diffuse clumps. The fleshy trailing stems are white or white tinged pink, and root freely at the nodes. Leaves pale green to pink (in exposed, stressed plants) fused at base, 1.3-3 x 1-1.5 mm, 0.8 mm thick, ovate-elliptic, flattened above, convex beneath; apex rounded or subacute. Flowers solitary in leaf axils, minute, 1.2-1.8 mm diameter, with 4 petals. Petals greenish with pink tips, often obscured by subtending calyx lobes. Mature fruits minute. Seeds black 0.4 mm long.



In cultivation, ex Makara. Nov 2004.
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In cultivation, ex Makara. Nov 2004.
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SIMILAR TAXA

Distinguished from *C. manaia* by its greater size, tendency to form diffuse clumps, with the pale stems obvious between leaf clusters, and by its larger flowers and seeds. Distinguished from *C. sieberiana* and *C. colligata* by its smaller, moss-like, decumbent habit, with the stems scarcely erect, trailing or arching over the ground, and by the flowers solitary in the leaf axils. Introduced species *C. colorata* var. *acuminata* and *C. alata* might also be confused with it.

FLOWERING

Flowering has been observed throughout the year.

FLOWER COLOURS

Green, Red/Pink

FRUITING

Fruiting plants may be found throughout the year.

LIFE CYCLE

Minute follicles are dispersed by wind and water and possibly also by attachment (Thorsen et al., 2009).

PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

Very easily grown from small rooted pieces or seed. Although plants grow quickly they are prone to being invaded and smothered by other more aggressive weeds, such as *Cardamine* spp. or *Oxalis* spp.

THREATS

The habitats it occupies are frequented by introduced weeds. Because it is so small, *C. mataikona* is easily overlooked, and so has been rarely collected. It is easily confused with seedling *C. sieberiana* or *C. colligata* (two species with which it often grows), or even the much smaller *C. manaia*. As a result of the potential for these misidentifications some *C. mataikona* populations have gone unrecognised until recently. It is such incidental discoveries as these which suggest *C. mataikona* might be more common than previously believed.

ETYMOLOGY

crassula: From the Latin *crassus* 'thick', meaning 'rather thick'

ATTRIBUTION

Fact sheet prepared for NZPCN by P.J. de Lange (1 November 2005). Description adapted from Allan (1961) and Webb et al. (1988), supplemented with observations made from fresh and dried material.

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.
Webb, C.J.; Sykes, W.R.; Garnock-Jones, P.J. 1988: Flora of New Zealand. Vol. IV. Naturalised Pteridophytes, Gymnosperms, Dicotyledons. Christchurch, New Zealand, Botany Division, D.S.I.R..

NZPCN FACT SHEET CITATION

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MORE INFORMATION

<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/crassula-mataikona/>