Haloragis erecta subsp. erecta

COMMON NAMES
toatoa, fire weed, shrubby haloragis

BIOSTATUS
Native – Endemic taxon

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

CATEGORY
Vascular

STRUCTURAL CLASS
Herbs - Dicotyledons other than Composites

FLOWER COLOURS
Red/Pink, Yellow

DETAILED DESCRIPTION
Perennial herb or subshrub. Stems to c.1 m tall, decumbent to erect, freely branching, 4-angled, glabrous or scabrid. Leaves opposite. Petiole (0.2)-0.5-1.7-(3) cm long. Lamina (12-)15-70(-90) × (3-)-5-25-(-35) mm, lanceolate to elliptic or oblong-elliptic, strongly serrate with teeth to 4 mm long, glabrous or scabridulous; lateral veins obscure; base cuneate to truncate. Dichasia of 3-7 flowers; primary bracts ± serrate. Pedicels 0.5-0.6 mm long, to 1 mm at fruiting, deflexed until anthesis. Flowers 4-merous, often reddish. Sepals 0.8-1.2 mm long, deltoid, erect, persistent. Petals 1.5-.0(-2.5) mm long. Stamens 8. Anthers 1.2-1.7 mm long, oblong, red or yellow, the inner < outer. Ovary 4-celled, ribbed. Stigmas ± pink. Fruit 1.8-3.0 × 1.5-2.5(-4.0) mm (including the usually present, variable, deltoid wings), usually ovoid, rugose or smooth between ribs or wings.

SIMILAR TAXA
None. The Surville Cliffs endemic H. erecta subsp. cartilaginea (Cheeseman) Orchard is scarcely any different. The main differences are its decumbent rather than erect habit and orbicular to broad-ovate leaves. In cultivation plants of this subspecies often become suberect, laxer, and the leaves less harshly scabrid.

DISTRIBUTION
Endemic. New Zealand: Kermadec, North, South, Stewart and Chatham Islands.

HABITAT
Coastal to montane in forest or scrub. Often on slip scars or colonising recently cleared ground. Often appearing following fire (hence one of the common names).

GENUS
Haloragis

FAMILY
Haloragaceae

AUTHORITY
Haloragis erecta (Murray) Oken subsp. erecta

Catlins. Photographer: John Barkla, Licence: CC BY.

Hutt River Trail north of Stokes Valley, Lower Hutt. Photographer: Jeremy R. Rolfe, Date taken: 06/05/2006, Licence: CC BY.

SYNONYMS
Cercodia erecta Murray, Haloragis colensoi Skottsb.

ENDEMIC TAXON
Yes

ENDEMIC GENUS
No

ENDEMIC FAMILY
No

FLOWERING
Throughout the year

FRUITING
Throughout the year

LIFE CYCLE AND DISPERSAL
Fruit are wind dispersed (Thorsen et al., 2009)

PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE
Easily grown from fresh seed and by cuttings. A somewhat weedy species which often appears following disturbance within forest and scrub, and which can at times appear within unkept gardens and wasteland within urban areas. Some forms are dark purple-red or maroon in colour.

WETLAND PLANT INDICATOR STATUS RATING
FACU: Facultative Upland
Occasionally is a hydrophyte but usually occurs in uplands (non-wetlands).

ETYMOLOGY
haloragis: Salt grapes
erecta: Erect

NVS CODE
HALESE

CHROMOSOME NUMBER
2n = 14

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 Not Threatened | Qualifiers: DPS, DPT 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

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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.

ATTRIBUTION

Fact sheet prepared for NZPCN by P.J. de Lange (3 November 2005). Description based on Webb et al. (1988) and observations made from fresh material.

NZPCN FACT SHEET CITATION

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MORE INFORMATION

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