Hibiscus richardsonii

COMMON NAME
Native Hibiscus, puarangi

SYNONYMS
Has been erroneously referred to Hibiscus trionum L.

FAMILY
Malvaceae

AUTHORITY
Hibiscus richardsonii Lindl.

FLORA CATEGORY
Vascular – Native

ENDEMIC TAXON
Indeterminate

ENDEMIC GENUS
No

ENDEMIC FAMILY
No

STRUCTURAL CLASS
Dicotyledonous Herbs other than Composites

CHROMOSOME NUMBER
2n = 28

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS
2012 | Threatened – Nationally Critical | Qualifiers: CD, EF, Sp, TO

PREVIOUS CONSERVATIONSTATUSES
2009 | Threatened – Nationally Critical | Qualifiers: EF, Sp, TO
2004 | Threatened – Nationally Endangered

DISTRIBUTION
Indigenous. New Zealand, North Island, from Te Paki eastward to Hicks Bay, including Great Barrier and Mayor (Tuhua) Islands. Also Australia (New South Wales)

HABITAT
Strictly coastal, growing in recently disturbed habitats, such as around slip scars, within petrel colonies, on talus slopes, and under open coastal scrub and forest. At Mayor (Tuhua) Island it is associated with an old pa site. The seed is long-lived, and has a persistent seed bank, such that this species often appears following major habitat disturbances caused by storm damage or fire

FEATURES
Annual to short-lived perennial herb up to 1 m tall. Stems densely clothed in stellate hairs when young becoming glabrescent with age. Lower leaves puberulent, suborbicular, entire to finely serrated, stem leaves pale green at first becoming purple-red with age, palmately 3-5-lobed, 10-60 mm long, puberulent, segments finely serrated (rather deeply serrated). Flowers solitary and axillary, rarely pseudoterminal; epicalyx segments (8-)10-13, free to near base, linear-lanceolate, calyx deeply campanulate; calyx teeth ovate-triangular, somewhat < tube in length. Petals (5)-10(-15) mm long, uniformly white, cream to very pale yellow, basally sometimes with pale reddish-pink striations. Capsule long persistent, with papery calyx. Seeds 1.5-2 mm, finely papillate.
SIMILAR TAXA
A naturalised race of Hibiscus trionum is often confused with H. richardsonii (see de Lange et al. 2010; Craven et al. 2011). It has larger, more deeply divided and lobed leaves, much larger pale-yellow to yellow flowers which open fully, petals which are consistently and distinctly basally blotched dark brown, purple-red or maroon, and larger seeds.

FLOWERING
(September-) October - May

FLOWER COLOURS
Cream, White

FRUITING
(September-) June (potentially all year round)

LIFE CYCLE
Seeds are dispersed by wind and possibly granivory (Thorsen et al., 2009).

PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE
Easy from seed. A short-lived perennial which behaves as an annual in colder climates. Frost-sensitive. Does best in an open, sunny situation. Can be somewhat weedy, and has a very persistent seed-bank

THREATS
Hibiscus richardsonii is very palatable to stock, and it is prone to being outcompeted by faster growing and taller weeds. As a species requiring open ground it is especially vulnerable to this threat. Previously regarded (as Hibiscus aff. trionum (AK 218967; New Zealand)) as Nationally Critical in de Lange et al. (2009)

ETYMOLOGY
hibiscus: Name of very ancient origin used by the Roman poet Virgil for the marsh mallow plant.

ATTIBUTION
Description based on de Lange et al. (2010). Fact sheet prepared by P.J. de Lange (September 2009)

REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

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

MORE INFORMATION