

Korthalsella salicornioides

COMMON NAME

Dwarf mistletoe

SYNONYMS

Viscum salicornioides A.Cunn.

FAMILY

Viscaceae

AUTHORITY

Korthalsella salicornioides (A.Cunn.) Tiegh.

FLORA CATEGORY

Vascular – Native

ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes

ENDEMIC GENUS

No

ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Trees & Shrubs - Dicotyledons

NVS CODE

KORSAL

CHROMOSOME NUMBER

2n = 28

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2018 | Threatened – Nationally Critical

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2012 | At Risk – Naturally Uncommon | Qualifiers: Sp

2009 | At Risk – Naturally Uncommon | Qualifiers: EF

2004 | Sparse

BRIEF DESCRIPTION

Dense mass of green to reddish-yellow beaded succulent stems to 10cm long growing on twigs of another plant (mainly manuka and kanuka). Leaves (stems) 3-10mm long by 1-3mm wide, round. Flowers tiny, fruit small, yellowish.

DISTRIBUTION

Endemic. North, South and Stewart Islands. From Te Pahi south - easily overlooked.

HABITAT

Coastal to upper montane and subalpine (0-1300 m a.s.l.). A parasite found in forest and shrublands. Most commonly found parasitic on *Leptospermum scoparium* J.R.Forst. et G.Forst. (kahikatoa/manuka) and members of the *Kunzea ericoides* (A.Rich.) Joy Thomps. (Rawiri/Titiri/Kanuka) complex.



Surville Cliffs. Feb 2011. Photographer: Jeremy Rolfe



Black Jack. Photographer: John Smith-Dodsworth

FEATURES

Hemiparasitic, succulent, much branched, green, yellow-green, red-green to orange-green plant parasitising exposed branches and branchlets of host. Haustoria internal, dark green, encircling stele of host. Plants 30-100 x 10-450 mm, erupting from host bark, individual aerial structures lasting from 1-4 years before dehiscing and resprouting. Branches arising at narrow angles; Internodes terete, succulent to subsucculent, 3-10 x 1-3 mm, narrowed to a finely constricted node. Collar truncate, up to 0.5 mm long, sheathing at nodes. Flowers scarcely differentiated from barren stems, 3-10 x 1 mm. Fruit 1.5 mm long, ovoid to globular, dispersed by birds or ejected under hydraulic pressure

SIMILAR TAXA

None - the two other species of *Korthalsella* Tiegh. endemic to New Zealand have flattened internodes and fewer branches arising at wider angles.

FLOWERING

October - March

FRUITING

October - May

LIFE CYCLE

Fleshy berries are dispersed by ballistic projection, attachment and possibly frugivory (Thorsen et al., 2009).

PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

Difficult - should not be removed from the wild

THREATS

An apparently naturally uncommon and biologically sparse species which can on occasion be locally abundant, but is more usually known from large parts of its likely range by only spot or scattered occurrences. In some parts of its range it is seriously at risk due to the felling of its main host species (*Leptospermum* and *Kunzea*) for fire wood and also to clear land for farming or pine plantations.

ETYMOLOGY

korthalsella: After Korthals, botanist

salicornioides: Like *Salicornia* (glasswort)

WHERE TO BUY

Not commercially available

HOSTS

The most host specific of the three New Zealand species of the genus, the favoured host is *Leptospermum scoparium* followed by *Kunzea ericoides* s.l. However *Sophora chathamica* Cockayne, *Myrsine australis* (A.Rich.) Allan, *Dracophyllum acerosum* Bergg., *Melicope simplex* A.Cunn. and *Gaultheria antipoda* G.Forst. are sometimes also parasitised.

ATTRIBUTION

Fact sheet prepared by P.J. de Lange for NZPCN (1 June 2013)

REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

Cameron, E.K. 2001. *Korthalsella salicornioides* discovered close to Auckland city. Auckland Botanical Society Journal, 56: 53-54

Nickrent, D.L.; Malécot, V.; Vidal-Russell, R.; Der, J.P. 2010: A revised classification of Santalales. *Taxon* 59: 538-558.

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

CITATION

Please cite as: de Lange, P.J. (Year at time of access): *Korthalsella salicornioides* Fact Sheet (content continuously updated). New Zealand Plant Conservation Network.

<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/korthalsella-salicornioides/> (Date website was queried)

MORE INFORMATION

<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/korthalsella-salicornioides/>