

Leycesteria formosa

COMMON NAMES

Himalayan honeysuckle

BIOSTATUS

Exotic

CONSERVATION STATUS

Not applicable

CATEGORY

Vascular

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Trees & Shrubs - Dicotyledons

FLOWER COLOURS

White

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Shrub to 2m high; stems hollow, glabrous, green, glaucous at first. Petiole .5~2cm long, purplish, with hairy groove on upper side. Lamina 4~14 x 1.5~8cm, ovate or broad-ovate, mostly entire, sometimes 5~9-lobed with rounded sinuses, becoming glabrous except for midrib and bases of main veins; base rounded to cordate; apex long-acuminate. Infl. 3~8cm long at flowering. Bracts mostly 1~3cm long, sessile, broad-ovate, aristate-acuminate, generally glandular-hairy, usu. deep reddish-purple. Calyx small, hidden by bracts; lobes very unequal. Corolla approx. 1.5cm long, funnellform, white; lobes rounded at apex, much < tube, with glandular-hairy margins. Stamens shortly exserted. Style > stamens. Berry 7~10mm diam., subglobose, dark brownish-purple, glandular-hairy. Seed 1.1~1.5mm long, obovoid-ellipsoid, shining brown, minutely white-dotted. (- Webb et. al., 1988)

SIMILAR TAXA

An evergreen shrub 2 - 3 metres tall (Hilgendorf 1926; Department of Conservation 1996). The plant has green hollow stems (Hilgendorf 1926; Department of Conservation 1996). The leaves occur opposite each other on the branches (Hilgendorf 1926). The leaves are 8 cm long (up to 24cm long (Department of Conservation 1996)), broad at the base and pointed at the tip (Hilgendorf 1926). The flowers are white and pink in drooping spikes (Hilgendorf 1926). The flowers are enclosed within pairs of purplish leaves (Hilgendorf 1926). The red-purple bracts which surround the small flowers are a conspicuous distinguishing feature of this plant (Veitch 1995; Department of Conservation 1996). The fruit is black brownish purple and is 7 - 10 mm in diameter (Veitch 1995; Department of Conservation 1996).

HABITAT

Terrestrial. A plant of coastal and lowland habitats (Timmins & MacKenzie 1995). The plant occurs in streams and favours damper habitats (Veitch 1995; Department of Conservation 1996). A plant of streams, shrublands, light gaps in forests (such as windfall gaps), roadsides, exotic plantations, farm hedges and wasteland habitats (Veitch 1995; Department of Conservation 1996). A plant of scrub and forest margin, shrubland and riverbed communities (Timmins & MacKenzie 1995).

GENUS

Leycesteria



Stokes Valley, Lower Hutt. Photographer: Jeremy R. Rolfe, Date taken: 13/12/2001, Licence: CC BY.



Himalayan honeysuckle. Photographer: John Barkla, Licence: CC BY.

FAMILY

Caprifoliaceae

AUTHORITY

Leycesteria formosa Wall.

FLOWERING

December, January, February, March, April, May.

YEAR NATURALISED

1878

ORIGIN

temp Himalayan

REASON FOR INTRODUCTION

Ornamental

TOLERANCES

The plant is shade intolerant.

LIFE CYCLE AND DISPERSAL

Perennial. Abundant seed produced (Timmins & MacKenzie 1995; Veitch 1995, Department of Conservation 1996). Water and birds disperse seed (Veitch 1995; Department of Conservation 1996).

WETLAND PLANT INDICATOR STATUS RATING

FACU: Facultative Upland

Occasionally is a hydrophyte but usually occurs in uplands (non-wetlands).

ENVIRONMENTAL WEED (2024)

This plant is named in a list of 386 environmental weeds in New Zealand 2024 prepared by DOC. 759 candidate species were considered for inclusion on this new comprehensive list of environmental weeds in New Zealand. The species considered were drawn from published lists of weed species, lists of plants that must be reported or managed by law if observed, existing national and regional programmes and agreements for pest management, and species already managed by the Department of Conservation (DOC). Candidate species were then assessed to see if they were fully naturalised and whether they have more than minor impacts in natural ecosystems. Read the full report [here](#).

NVS CODE

LEYFOR

MORE INFORMATION

<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/leycesteria-formosa/>

PDF DATE

25 May 2026