

Nertera villosa

COMMON NAMES

hairy forest nertera

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

Green, Yellow

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Prostrate hairy herb, openly branched, rooting at nodes. **Stems** 0.6-1.0 mm diameter with internodes 20-40 mm long, densely hairy when young. Hairs subappressed at first, becoming patent to erect, straight, becoming bent, 3-5-celled, the distal cell tapered to a fine point. **Leaves** opposite, stipulate, petiolate. **Stipule** interpetiolar, adnate to base of petiole, broadly triangular, 1.0 × 1.5 mm, undersides hairy when young, becoming membranous. **Petiole** 4-10mm long, hairy. **Lamina** broadly ovate-deltoid, 7-15 × 5-13 mm, apex subacute, base truncate, entire, with scattered erect hairs on both surfaces, margins glabrous, rich green above, pale green or purplish below, veins obscure above, clear below, raphides obscure. **Flowers** bisexual, protogynous, solitary and terminal on short branchlets, sessile, closely subtended by 2 pairs of leaves. Calyx a shallow rim, irregularly lobed, lobes c.0.2 mm long. Corolla funnelform, c. 3 mm long, 4-lobed, lobes ovate, spreading, undersides translucent green with purple flecks, 1 mm long, acute, upper surface hairy, margins papillose. Stamens 4, filaments glabrous, attached to receptacle and adnate to base of corolla tube, anthers yellow, dorsifixed, exserted from corolla. Style bifid, pale green, branches diverging, exserted from corolla. Ovary inferior, 2-celled, with 1 ovule in each cell. **Fruit** a globose, orange to red, shining, drupe, c. 6 mm diameter, often hairy, **Seeds** 2, plano-convex, c.3.5 × 2.5 mm.

SIMILAR TAXA

Nertera villosa differs from the other six New Zealand species of *Nertera* by its more robust habit, and in being densely covered in erect to sub-appressed straight hairs comprised of 3-5 cells. *Nertera dichondrifolia* (A.Cunn.) Hook.f. is a more slender plant of northern North Island forests (mostly north of 38°S) with the leaves apiculate and the hairs more sparse, curved, and comprised of 7-13 cells

DISTRIBUTION

Endemic. New Zealand: North (scarce north of 37°S (Waipoua, Little and Great Barrier Islands), otherwise common), South, Stewart and Chatham Islands.

HABITAT

Lowland to montane. Usually in forest. Occasionally along river banks in frost flats. Uncommon in the drier parts of the eastern North and South Islands.



Mangatainoka River, Tararua Range.
Photographer: Jeremy R. Rolfe, Date taken:
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in cultivation. Photographer: Jeremy R. Rolfe,
Date taken: 19/07/2007, Licence: CC BY.

GENUS

Nertera

FAMILY

Rubiaceae

AUTHORITY

Nertera villosa B.H.Macmill. et R.Mason

SYNONYMS

None (first described in 1995)

ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes

ENDEMIC GENUS

No

ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

FLOWERING

September – January

FRUITING

October – June

PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

Easily grown from rooted pieces. An excellent ground cover for a shaded pathway or under taller shrubs and trees.

ETYMOLOGY

nertera: Lowly, low growing

villosa: From Latin (villus) meaning shaggy or hairy.

NVS CODE

NERVIL

CHROMOSOME NUMBER

2n = 44

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 Threatened – Regionally Endangered | Qualifiers: DPR, DPS, DPT, PF, RR 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 | Qualifiers: TL 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

MacMillan, B.H. 1995: Nertera villosa B.H.Macmill. et R.Mason (Rubiaceae), a new species from New Zealand. New Zealand Journal of Botany 33: 435-438.

ATTRIBUTION

Description adapted from MacMillan (1995).

MORE INFORMATION

<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/nertera-villosa/>

PDF DATE

07 June 2026