

# Peperomia leptostachya

## SYNONYMS

Has been referred to as *Peperomia blanda* var. *floribunda* (Miq.) H.Huber

## FAMILY

Piperaceae

## AUTHORITY

*Peperomia leptostachya* Hook. et Arn.

## FLORA CATEGORY

Vascular – Native

## ENDEMIC TAXON

No

## ENDEMIC GENUS

No

## ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

## STRUCTURAL CLASS

Herbs - Dicotyledons other than Composites

## CHROMOSOME NUMBER

2n = 66

## CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2012 | Non-resident Native – Coloniser | Qualifiers: OL, SO

## PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2009 | Non-resident Native – Coloniser | Qualifiers: SO, OL

2004 | Non-resident Native – Vagrant

## DISTRIBUTION

In New Zealand known from Raoul Island (Kermadec Island group) only. Common on islands throughout the Pacific

## HABITAT

In New Zealand found as a low epiphyte on Kermadec Pohutukawa (*Metrosideros kermadecensis* W.R.B.Oliv.), on cliff faces and amongst rocks and rubble beneath cliff faces and ravines on Raoul Island.

## FEATURES

Succulent perennial herb forming sparingly to densely branched shrublets up to 500 x 600 mm. Stems light yellow green to reddish-green, ascending or erect from creeping base, 150-250-500 mm long, up to 10 mm diameter at base, branches less toward apex, internodes 10-40 mm apart; surfaces finely puberulent (hairs 0.3-0.8 mm long). Leaves opposite or sometimes ternate, usually falling readily. Petioles 5-10 mm long, puberulent. Leaf lamina 15-60 x 12-30 mm, dark green to yellow-green, lower surface paler, elliptic-obovate to elliptic, or elliptic-ovate, apex broadly acute, obtuse or rounded, base cuneate to broadly cuneate; palmately 3-5-nerved, finely puberulent, moderately firm-fleshy, thin and membranous. Inflorescences axillary or terminal spikes, these numerous, 20-130 mm long, rachis 0.5-1 mm diameter, glabrous. Flowers moderately close to loosely spaced, peduncles 5-25 mm long, puberulent with finely spreading to appressed hairs; ovary broadly ovoid, apex oblique; stigmas subterminal. Fruit broadly obovoid 0.9-1 mm.



*Peperomia blanda* plant in the wild, Raoul Island, 2004. Photographer: Bec Stanley



*Peperomia blanda*. Photographer: Peter de Lange

## SIMILAR TAXA

It is not closely allied to any of the other species found in New Zealand. On Raoul Island it grows with *P. urvilleana* from which it is easily distinguished by its larger uniformly hairy leaves

## FLOWERING

October - July

## FRUITING

October - July

## PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

Easy from rooted pieces, stem cuttings and (if available) fresh seed. Cold sensitive but an excellent pot plant for a warm, shaded site in the house

## THREATS

Still uncommon on Raoul Island, though recent (2004, 2009) field survey suggests it is actively increasing its range on that island (de Lange 2020).

## ETYMOLOGY

**peperomia:** From the Greek *peperi* (pepper) and *homoios* (resembling), referring to its resemblance to a true pepper (to which it is closely related)

**leptostachya:** Slender spiked

## COMMENTS

Formerly listed as a vagrant. It is now clear that it is actively spreading and as it is apparently no longer constrained to a particular habitat on Raoul Island it is better regarded as a Coloniser. New Zealand plants were initially referred to *P. leptostachya*, then Sykes & West (1996) following Forster (1993) placed Raoul plants in *P. blanda* var. *floribunda* by Forster (1993) (see also comments by Murray & de Lange (2013). Recently Mathieu (2020) showed that *Peperomia blanda* var. *floribunda* was a superfluous name and that the widespread Pacific Basin plant that had been referred to it and to *P. blanda* was actually *P. leptostachya*. *Peperomia blanda* is a northern South American species (see also comments by de Lange 2020).

## ATTRIBUTION

Fact Sheet prepared by P.J. de Lange (30 August 2011). Description based on fresh specimens and live plants from Raoul Island.

## REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

de Lange, P.J. 2020: *Peperomia leptostachya* (Piperaceae) on Raoul Island, Kermadec Islands—a name reinstated. *Trilepidea* 197: 3-8

Forster, P.I. 1993: A taxonomic revision of the genus *Peperomia* Ruiz & Pav. (Piperaceae) in mainland Australia. *Austrobaileya* 4: 93-104.

Mathieu, G. 2020: *Peperomia leptostachya* (Piperaceae) revived. *Candollea* 75: 45-49.

Murray, B.G.; de Lange, P.J. 2013: Contributions to a chromosome atlas of the New Zealand flora – 40. Miscellaneous counts for 36 families. *New Zealand Journal of Botany* 51: 31-60.

Sykes, W.R.; West, C.J. 1996: New records and other information on the vascular flora of the Kermadec Islands. *New Zealand Journal of Botany* 34: 447-462.

## NZPCN FACT SHEET CITATION

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

## MORE INFORMATION

<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/peperomia-leptostachya/>