

# Peperomia tetraphylla

## SYNONYMS

*Piper tetraphyllum* G.Forst., *Peperomia novae-zelandiae* Colenso

## FAMILY

Piperaceae

## AUTHORITY

*Peperomia tetraphylla* (G.Forst.) Hook. et Arn.

## FLORA CATEGORY

Vascular – Native

## ENDEMIC TAXON

No

## ENDEMIC GENUS

No

## ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

## STRUCTURAL CLASS

Dicotyledonous Herbs other than Composites

## NVS CODE

PEPTET

## CHROMOSOME NUMBER

2n = 44

## CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2012 | At Risk – Naturally Uncommon | Qualifiers: SO, Sp

## PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2009 | At Risk – Naturally Uncommon | Qualifiers: SO

2004 | Sparse

## DISTRIBUTION

Indigenous. Recorded from Northland, the Bay of Plenty and East Cape areas. Also known from Australia and some Pacific Islands.

## HABITAT

Coastal to lowland, usually epiphytic on tree trunks (particularly near branch junctions) but also found amongst tree roots. Often found on shaded cliff faces and ledges and on boulders within forest. This species is quite tolerant of dry conditions but seems to flourish near streams, water falls and seepages.

## FEATURES

Succulent herb up to 200 x 300 mm. Plants often epiphytic or rupestral. Branches 1-3 mm diameter, dark green, reddish-green to yellow-green, numerous, ascending and spreading; initially finely puberulent, becoming glabrescent with pubescent retained at nodes. Leaves in whorls of (3-)4, or opposite, subsessile, 5-15 x 4-12 mm, dark green to yellow-green above paler beneath, rhomboid to suborbicular, thick, fleshy, coriaceous, puberulent when young. Inflorescence a terminal spike 10-40 mm long; axis puberulent; bract orbicular-peltate, subsessile, flowers minute, greenish-yellow. Stamens 2, minute, subsessile. Ovary partially immersed in axis; ovoid, acute; stigma capitellate. Drupe 1.5 mm long, ovoid, red to red-green, very sticky.

## SIMILAR TAXA

Could only be confused with *Peperomia urvilleana* A.Rich., which is much larger in all respects, has alternate rather than whorled, elliptic-oblong to broad-oblong rather than rhomboid to suborbicular leaves and both terminal and axillary rather than only terminal spikes.



Close up of *Peperomia tetraphylla* plants, Hicks Bay, Onepoto Bay Track. Photographer: Peter de Lange



Hicks Bay, Onepoto Bay. Photographer: Peter de Lange

## FLOWERING

September - April

## FLOWER COLOURS

Green, Yellow

## FRUITING

November - April (-May)

## PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

Easy from rooted pieces and fresh seed but can be short-lived. An excellent pot plant. Cold sensitive

## THREATS

Not actively threatened but generally uncommon. Some populations are very small, and most of those in Northland occur on private land where they are vulnerable to forest clearance

## ETYMOLOGY

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

**tetraphylla**: Four-leaved

## WHERE TO BUY

Occasionally offered by specialist native plant nurseries.

## ATTRIBUTION

Fact Sheet Prepared by P.J. de Lange (1 November 2009). Description based on Allan (1961) supplemented with observations made from fresh material.

## REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

Allan, H.H. 1961: Flora of New Zealand. Vol. I. Wellington, Government Printer.

## CITATION

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

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

## MORE INFORMATION

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