

Rubus schmidelioides var. schmidelioides

COMMON NAMES

tātārāmoa, bush lawyer, white-leaved lawyer

BIOSTATUS

Native – Endemic taxon

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2023 | Not Threatened

[Jump to previous conservation statuses](#)

CATEGORY

Vascular

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Trees & Shrubs - Dicotyledons

SIMPLIFIED DESCRIPTION

Prickly scrambling vine. Prickles red. Leaves compound; leaflets usually three, these leathery, dark-green to bronze green, markedly wrinkled above with the undersides covered in fine white, grey-white or brown tomentum. Flowers white or cream in small panicles. Fruits yellow or orange.

FLOWER COLOURS

Cream, White

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Much-branched dioecious vine with stems up to 10 m or more long when growing through supporting vegetation or forming sprawling bushes with interlacing branchlets when exposed. Young branchlets terete, up to 40 mm diameter; pubescent, becoming glabrous with age, armed or unarmed; when armed then armed with small, reddish prickles. Stipules minute, caducous, linear to linear-filiform. Leaves of adults ternate to palmate, petioles 20-50 mm long; lamina of adult leaflets 30-80 × 10-50 mm, coriaceous, ovate, oval, lanceolate, elliptic to broadly elliptic, acute, subacute to obtuse, rounded to oblique at base, margins coarsely and often unevenly serrate, adaxially dark green to bronze-green, more or less glossy, glabrous or almost glabrous, rugose to bullate, veins distinct (these often minutely pubescent), abaxially glaucous to white, usually finely, densely tomentose, tomentum white to grey-white, veins prominent below, pubescent, midrib armed or not; petiolules 3-5 (~20 mm long). Inflorescence a much-branched panicle up to 100 mm long (rarely reduced to few-flowered racemes), branchlets and pedicels unarmed, more or less finely pubescent. Flowers white to cream, usually densely aggregate, on pedicels 5-10 mm long. Sepals 2-6 mm long, ovate-oblong to broad-ovate, pubescent; petals 5, 4-7 mm long, ovate to broadly ovate. Male flowers with numerous stamens, ovary absent or rudimentary. Female flowers with rudimentary stamen, carpels numerous. Fruits 5-9 mm diameter, drupelets 8-12 (or more), yellow or orange. Endocarp 'seed' 1.9-2.5 mm long, dorsally ridged 2x.



Abaxial leaf surface and red thorns, central Southland. Photographer: Jesse Bythell, Date taken: 20/04/2018, Licence: CC BY-NC.



Whakamaru, Kaahu Road. Photographer: Peter J de Lange, Date taken: 24/10/2010, Licence: CC BY-NC.

SIMILAR TAXA

Distinguished from introduced *Rubus* (blackberries, raspberries wineberries etc) by the smaller flowers, usually palmate or ternate leaves, and the lack of long glandular bristly hairs on the young stems. *Rubus schmidelioides* var. *schmidelioides* differs from the other indigenous New Zealand *Rubus* (bush lawyers) by the red prickles, leathery, rugose to bullate leaves, with greyish white, white (rarely brown) tomentose or glaucous leaflet undersides, and yellow to orange fruits. *Rubus schmidelioides* var. *subpauperatus* differs from var. *schmidelioides* by the more conspicuously armed stems, petioles and leaf midveins, ternate to palmate leaves, by the narrowly lanceolate leaflets, and more compact panicles.

DISTRIBUTION

Endemic. New Zealand: North Island (from about Hikurangi - Dargaville South), South and Stewart Islands

HABITAT

Coastal to montane in scrub and forest.

GENUS

Rubus

FAMILY

Rosaceae

AUTHORITY

Rubus schmidelioides A.Cunn. var. *schmidelioides*

SYNONYMS

Rubus australis var. *schmidelioides* (A.Cunn.) Hook.f.; *Rubus cissoides* var. *coloratus* Kirk

TAXONOMIC NOTES

In the North-West Nelson region (west from about the Wakamarama range south to the Mokihinui Bluff) a very broad-leaved race of *Rubus schmidelioides* is present (the description above includes this entity). On account of its large leaflets it is known locally as *Rubus* "Strawberry Leaf" - its taxonomic status requires further investigation.

ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes

ENDEMIC GENUS

No

ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

FLOWERING

September - November

FRUITING

December - April

PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

Easily grown from layered stems and semi-hardwood cuttings. Flourishes when planted in damp ground in a well-lighted situation. Not often grown on account of its prickly stems - but nevertheless an attractive plant. The fruits though edible are insipid.

WETLAND PLANT INDICATOR STATUS RATING

FAC: Facultative

Commonly occurs as either a hydrophyte or non-hydrophyte (non-wetlands).

ETYMOLOGY

rubus: From the Latin meaning bramble

schmidelioides: Like schmidelia, a soap wort

NVS CODE

RUBSVS

CHROMOSOME NUMBER

2n = 28

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 Data Deficient 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 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

Allan HH. 1961. Flora of New Zealand, Volume I. Indigenous Tracheophyta: Psilopsida, Lycopsida, Filicopsida, Gymnospermae, Dicotyledones. Government Printer, Wellington, NZ. 1085

Webb CJ, Sykes WR, Garnock-Jones PJ. 1988. Flora of New Zealand, Volume IV. Naturalised Pteridophytes, Gymnosperms, Dicotyledons. Botany Division, Department of Scientific and Industrial Research, Christchurch, NZ. 1365

Webb, C.J.; Simpson, M.J.A. 2001: Seeds of New Zealand Gymnosperms and Dicotyledons. Christchurch, Manuka Press.

ATTRIBUTION

Fact Sheet prepared for NZPCN by P.J. de Lange 26 October 2016. Description based on Allan (1961), Webb et al. (1988) and Webb & Simpson (2001)

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MORE INFORMATION

<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/rubus-schmidelioides-var-schmidelioides/>

PDF DATE

08 June 2026