

# Solanum aviculare var. latifolium

## COMMON NAMES

poroporo

## BIOSTATUS

Native

## CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2023 | At Risk – Naturally Uncommon | Qualifiers: RR, Sp

[Jump to previous conservation statuses](#)

## CATEGORY

Vascular

## STRUCTURAL CLASS

Trees & Shrubs - Dicotyledons

## SIMPLIFIED DESCRIPTION

Fleshy shrub to 2m tall bearing dark green thin wide leaves that have 1-3 large sharp lobes and large purpleish flowers that have a projecting yellow centre. Leaves 15-80cm long by 3-6cm wide. Flowers up to 40cm wide. Fruit yellow, 20-25mm long. POISONOUS.

## FLOWER COLOURS

Blue, Violet/Purple

## DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Small, softly woody shrub up to 2 x 2 m. Branches sparse to many, suberect to spreading, initially dark green, purple-green to reddish-brown, maturing with fine grey, chartaceous bark. Leaves alternate with decurrent, fleshy petioles up to 30 mm long; lamina fleshy-membranous to almost coriaceous, 150-800 x 30-60(-80) mm, dark green, purple-green or rarely yellow-green, broadly lanceolate, broadly elliptic, broad ovate to broadly rhomboid, usually entire, sometimes sinuate, often deeply 1-2-3-lobed or sparingly and irregularly pinnatifid (often on one side of lamina only); lobes/pinnae broadly lanceolate. Flowers axillary in 1-3 few to many-flowered cymes. Calyx lobes short, broad, spreading. Corolla broadly campanulate to rotate, up to 40 mm diameter; tube up to 10 mm long, funnelform, widely flaring at mouth, lobes 10-15 mm, lanceolate; white, lavender, dark blue or white striped with blue/lavender, in all cases usually fading to white after anthesis. Filaments up to 5 mm long. Anthers 5-6 mm long, oblong, spreading, yellow, opening by apical slits. Berry broadly oval, 20-25 mm long, drooping, at first dark green maturing yellow, rather fleshy. Seeds 1.3-2 mm long, dull to semi-glossy, orange-brown, purple-brown or dark purple brown, obovate to circular or transversely elliptic, often asymmetric, compressed.



*Solanum aviculare* var. *latifolium* in flower, Ex Cult. Great Island, Three Kings. Photographer: Peter J de Lange, Date taken: 23/12/2006, Licence: CC BY-NC.



*Solanum aviculare* var. *latifolium* foliage, Ex Cult. Great Island, Three Kings. Photographer: Peter J de Lange, Date taken: 23/12/2006, Licence: CC BY-NC.

## **SIMILAR TAXA**

Very close to *S. aviculare* G.Forst. var. *aviculare* and appearing to intergrade with it in the southern part of its range. *S. aviculare* var. *latifolium* is considered by many of dubious status, and it is not even recognised by most modern New Zealand treatments of the indigenous species. Nevertheless it does form a distinct true-breeding population on the Three Kings Islands and it is recognisable in some parts of the outer Hauraki Gulf and Coromandel Peninsula (and near shore islands to that area). NZPCN prefer to regard it as a distinct from var. *aviculare* mainly because of its much larger and wider usually simple to sparingly lobed leaves. In the Hauraki Gulf a form of *S. laciniatum* with broad, simple, usually entire leaves and white flowers is occasionally found. Without flowers it is impossible to distinguish from *S. aviculare* var. *latifolium*. Flowering specimens differ by their much larger (up to 50 mm) rotate flowers with very broad lobes and distinct frilled emarginate apices. Both taxa are cytologically distinct, *S. aviculare* has  $2n = 46$  cf  $2n = 96$  in *S. laciniatum*.

## **DISTRIBUTION**

Endemic. Three Kings Islands and some islands of the outer Hauraki Gulf south to the Coromandel Peninsula and surrounding islands. Exact distribution in the Hauraki Gulf not clear due to confusion of sterile plants with broad and simple leaved forms of *S. laciniatum* Aiton.

## **HABITAT**

Coastal. Usually in shaded sites within coastal forest often in and around sea bird nesting grounds (especially petrel burrows) or along forest/petrel scrub margins.

## **THREATS**

Not threatened. A widespread but biologically sparse plant which reaches its greatest abundance on the Three Kings Islands (its type locality).

## **GENUS**

*Solanum*

## **FAMILY**

Solanaceae

## **AUTHORITY**

*Solanum aviculare* var. *latifolium* G.T.S.Baylis

## **SYNONYMS**

*Solanum aviculare* f. *latifolium* G.T.S.Baylis nom. nud., *Solanum baylisii* Herasim.

## **ENDEMIC TAXON**

No

## **ENDEMIC GENUS**

No

## **ENDEMIC FAMILY**

No

## **FLOWERING**

Throughout the year

## **FRUITING**

Throughout the year

## **PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE**

Easily grown from fresh seed and semi-hardwood cuttings. Tolerant of heavy shade and full sun, and dry or wet soils but not frost. The wide leaves and smaller overall growth habit make this an interesting and worth while poroporo for the small garden. However, as with all poroporo the green fruits are extremely toxic.

## ETYMOLOGY

**solanum:** Derivation uncertain - possibly from the Latin word sol, meaning “sun,” referring to its status as a plant of the sun. Another possibility is that the root was solare, meaning “to soothe,” or solamen, meaning “a comfort,” which would refer to the soothing effects of the plant upon ingestion.

**aviculare:** Small bird

**latifolium:** Broad leaf

## CHROMOSOME NUMBER

2n = 46

## PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2017 | At Risk – Naturally Uncommon | Qualifiers: RR, Sp

2012 | At Risk – Naturally Uncommon | Qualifiers: Sp

2009 | At Risk – Naturally Uncommon

2004 | Sparse

[Jump to current conservation status](#)

## REGIONAL CONSERVATION STATUSES

Auckland: 2025 | Regionally Data Deficient | Qualifiers: DPR, DPS, DPT, EF, IN, 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.

## REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

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

Webb CJ, Sykes WR, Garnock-Jones PJ 1988. Flora of New Zealand. Vol. IV. Botany Division, DSIR, Christchurch.

## ATTRIBUTION

Fact Sheet prepared for the NZPCN by P.J. de Lange 12 May 2006. Description by P.J. de Lange with some elements based on Allan (1961) and Webb et al. (1988).

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## NZPCN FACT SHEET CITATION

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<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/solanum-aviculare-var-latifolium/> (Date website was queried)

## MORE INFORMATION

<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/solanum-aviculare-var-latifolium/>

## PDF DATE

27 May 2026