

Solanum aviculare var. latifolium

COMMON NAME

poroporo

SYNONYMS

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

FAMILY

Solanaceae

AUTHORITY

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

FLORA CATEGORY

Vascular – Native

ENDEMIC TAXON

No

ENDEMIC GENUS

No

ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Trees & Shrubs - Dicotyledons

CHROMOSOME NUMBER

2n = 46

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

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

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2012 | At Risk – Naturally Uncommon | Qualifiers: Sp

2009 | At Risk – Naturally Uncommon

2004 | Sparse

BRIEF 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.

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.



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* close up of flower, Ex Cult. Great Island, Three Kings. Photographer: Peter J. de Lange, Date taken: 23/12/2006, Licence: CC BY-NC.

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.

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*.

FLOWERING

Throughout the year

FLOWER COLOURS

Blue, Violet/Purple

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.

THREATS

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

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

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).

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.

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/>