

Solanum laciniatum

COMMON NAME

poroporo, bullibulli

SYNONYMS

Solanum laciniatum f. *novozelandicum* Herasim.

FAMILY

Solanaceae

AUTHORITY

Solanum laciniatum Aiton

FLORA CATEGORY

Vascular – Native

ENDEMIC TAXON

No

ENDEMIC GENUS

No

ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Trees & Shrubs - Dicotyledons

NVS CODE

SOLLAC

CHROMOSOME NUMBER

2n = 92

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2012 | Not Threatened

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2009 | Not Threatened

2004 | Not Threatened

BRIEF DESCRIPTION

Fleshy shrub to 4 m tall bearing dark green thin wide leaves that are divided into 1-3 large sharp lobes and with large, purplish, ruffled flowers that have a projecting yellow centre. Leaves 10-80 cm long by 4-6 cm wide. Flowers dished, up to 50 mm wide. Fruit yellow or orange, 23-30mm long. POISONOUS.

DISTRIBUTION

Indigenous. North, South, Stewart and Chatham Islands. Widespread from the Hauraki Gulf Islands and Auckland south. In the northern part of its range actively spreading northwards caused it would seem through establishment through bird dispersal of fruit from garden plantings. Also present in south eastern Australia and Tasmania. Naturalised in parts of China and Russia.

HABITAT

Coastal to montane (0-400 m a.s.l.). usually in disturbed successional habitats, in shrublands, gullies, alongside riversides, on forested margins and in reverting pasture. Often appears following fires. A common urban weed in many parts of the country.



Solanum laciniatum. Photographer: John Smith-Dodsworth



Harold Pierce Reserve, W Waitangi, Chatham Island. Photographer: Gillian Crowcroft

FEATURES

Erect to spreading, glabrous, soft-wooded shrub up to 4 x 3 m. Stems initially somewhat fleshy, purple-green, dark green to dark purple coloured, maturing with fine, firm, grey chartaceous bark, rather brittle. Leaves in stout petioles up to 50 mm long; lamina 100-800 x 40-60 mm, sometimes even larger, very dark green to purple-green, entire or pinnatisect, (then with 1-4(-6) pairs of lobes almost cut to midrib) on the same plant; lobes up to 50 x 20 mm, lanceolate to linear-lanceolate, or more or less elliptic; base decurrent on petiole; apex obtuse to acuminate. Flowers in 2-10-many-flowered cymes, peduncles up to 20 mm long at anthesis, decurved, slender but robust; pedicels pendent at fruiting. Calyx 5-8 mm long, accrescent; lobes broadly ovate-triangular, mucronate, much < tube. Corolla 50 mm diameter, rotate, violet or white, lobes very broad, margins frilled or ruffled, apices emarginate. Anthers 3-4 mm long. Berry 23-30 mm long, yellow or orange when ripe, fleshy, ovoid, ellipsoid, pendent, stone cells obvious and frequent similar in shape to seeds. Seeds 2.2-2.5 mm diameter, obovoid though somewhat asymmetric.

SIMILAR TAXA

Often confused with the now much less common *S. aviculare* G.Forst., which, in its typical state, has narrower leaves which are less frequently pinnatifid, usually much narrower. Flowers 10-40 mm diameter with campanulate-rotate flowers with narrower acute tipped lobes, not distinctly frilled (ruffled), smaller seeds (1-2 mm cf 2-3 mm) and a different chromosome number ($2n = 46$ cf $2n = 92$). *S. laciniatum* differs from *S. aviculare* f. *latifolium* (G.T.S.Baylis) G.T.S.Baylis by its broader, wider lobes with frilled/ruffled margins and an emarginate apex, and by the chromosome number ($2n = 92$ cf $2n = 46$).

FLOWERING

Throughout the year

FLOWER COLOURS

Violet/Purple, White

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 and cold tolerant. Extremely fast-growing and can become invasive. It should also be noted that, 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.

CULTURAL USE/IMPORTANCE

because the fruits of this species and *S. aviculare* G.Forst. var. *aviculare* yield important steroid precursors, both are widely and commercially grown, especially in eastern Europe, Russia and China.

POISONOUS PLANT

As with *Solanum aviculare* var. *aviculare*, the yellow or green berries are poisonous but when ripe (orange) they lose much of their toxicity. The symptoms are often delayed up to 6-12 hours and may include a fever, sweating, nausea and abdominal pain. Click on this link for more information about [Poisonous native plants](#).

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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MORE INFORMATION

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