Solanum laciniatum

COMMON NAMES
poroporo, bullibulli

BIOSTATUS
Native

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS
2023 | Not Threatened | Qualifiers: SO
Jump to previous conservation statuses

CATEGORY
Vascular

STRUCTURAL CLASS
Trees & Shrubs - Dicotyledons

SIMPLIFIED 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.

FLOWER COLOURS
Violet/Purple, White

DETAILED DESCRIPTION
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. lacinatum 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).



Wainuiomata. Photographer: Jeremy R. Rolfe, Date taken: 03/04/2016, Licence: CC BY.



Trentham, Upper Hutt. Photographer: Jeremy R. Rolfe, Date taken: 23/01/2016, Licence: CC BY.

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.

GENUS
Solanum

FAMILY
Solanaceae

AUTHORITY
Solanum laciniatum Aiton

SYNONYMS
Solanum laciniatum f. novozelandicum 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 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.

CULTIVATION
Because the fruits of this species and S. aviculare G.Forst. var. aviculare yield important steroid precursors, both are widely and commericially 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.

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.

NVS CODE
SOLLAC

CHROMOSOME NUMBER
2n = 92

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2017 | Not Threatened | Qualifiers: SO
2012 | Not Threatened
2009 | Not Threatened
2004 | Not Threatened
Jump to current conservation status

REGIONAL CONSERVATION STATUSES

Auckland: 2025 | Regionally Not Threatened | Qualifiers: DPS, DPT 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

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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MORE INFORMATION

https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/solanum-laciniatum/

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