

# Solanum opacum

## COMMON NAMES

green berry nightshade

## BIOSTATUS

Native

## CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2023 | Not Threatened | Qualifiers: SO

[Jump to previous conservation statuses](#)

## CATEGORY

Vascular

## STRUCTURAL CLASS

Herbs - Dicotyledons other than Composites

## FLOWER COLOURS

White

## DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Annual or short-lived perennial herb, forming spindly plants or densely branched bushes up to 1 m tall, all parts either glabrous or silky hairy.

**Stems** unarmed or weakly armed. **Leaves** on petioles (10)–20–60 mm long; lamina variable, 10–50–(80) × 8–40–(76) mm, green, yellow-green, dark-green, often blotched or tinged maroon, sometimes purple-green; ovate, ovate-oblong, lanceolate-ovate, entire, sinuate or coarsely toothed (sometimes distantly so), rarely lobulate, base attenuate to broadly attenuate, sometimes narrowly winged; apex acute.

**Inflorescences** umbellate, (3)–5–6–(10)-flowered, peduncles stout, 10–20 mm long, pedicels deflexed (strongly so at fruiting). **Calyx** 2–3 mm diameter at anthesis, accrescent; lobes broadly ovate to oblong, usually strongly reflexed at fruiting (sometimes with mixtures of mostly reflexed, and some weakly accrescent). **Corolla** 5–8 mm diameter, stellate, white or pale mauve, lobes narrowly lanceolate to narrowly deltoid. **Anthers** 1.0–1.5 mm. **Berry** up to 10 mm diameter, globose, green, purple-black or black, dull (not glossy); stone cells present. **Seeds** 1.0–2.5 mm diameter, obovate to broadly obovate or circular, compressed, orange-yellow to pale tan, glossy or not.

## SIMILAR TAXA

Distinguished from *Solanum nigrum* by the umbellate inflorescences, smaller stamens (1.0–1.5 mm long cf. 2 mm or more in length), smaller flowers with a stellate corolla, mostly reflexed, sometimes weakly accrescent calyx lobes, and dull purple-black to greenish-black fruits. *Solanum nigrum* has consistently accrescent calyx lobes, glossy purple black (in New Zealand plants) fruits, larger stamens, and larger flowers without a stellate corolla. *Solanum opacum* differs from *S. americanum* by having much broader, larger reflexed to weakly accrescent calyx lobes—the calyx lobes of *S. americanum* are always reflexed, smaller and much narrower. All three species are genetically distinct from and do not hybridize with each other.

## DISTRIBUTION

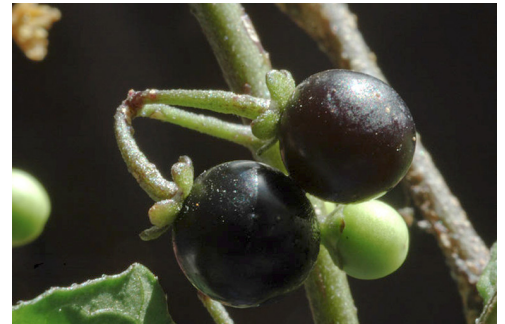
Indigenous. New Zealand: Kermadec Islands, North Island, probably elsewhere. A widespread species in the Pacific Basin and Australasia.

## HABITAT

A species of coastal and lowland, often early stage successional habitats. Also found in wasteland and urban areas growing with *S. nigrum* and *S. americanum*.



Newtown, Wellington. Photographer: Colin C. Ogle, Date taken: 22/04/2009, Licence: CC BY-NC.



Newtown, Wellington. Photographer: Colin C. Ogle, Date taken: 22/04/2009, Licence: CC BY-NC.

## THREATS

Probably 'Not Threatened' but as the presence of this species in New Zealand has only recently (2017) been recognized (specimens of this species have previously been confused with *S. americanum* and *S. nigrum*) as a precautionary measure it would be appropriate to treat *S. opacum* as 'Data Deficient' until more information becomes available. Indications are that it is likely to be widespread, at least in northern New Zealand, and it is present on the Kermadec Islands.

## GENUS

Solanum

## FAMILY

Solanaceae

## AUTHORITY

Solanum opacum A.Braun et C.D.Bouché

## ENDEMIC TAXON

No

## ENDEMIC GENUS

No

## ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

## FLOWERING

Throughout the year

## FRUITING

Throughout the year

## PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

Easily grown from fresh seed. However, like all members of the *S. nigrum* group, inclined to be weedy.

## 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

SOLOPA

## PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUS

2017 | Data Deficient

[Jump to current conservation status](#)

## REGIONAL CONSERVATION STATUSES

Auckland: 2025 | Regionally Not Threatened | Qualifiers: SO 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.

## ATTRIBUTION

Fact Sheet prepared for the NZPCN by P.J. de Lange 30 November 2017. Description by P.J. de Lange

## NZPCN FACT SHEET CITATION

Please cite as: de Lange, P.J. (Year at time of access): Solanum opacum Fact Sheet (content continuously updated). New Zealand Plant Conservation Network. <https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/solanum-opacum/> (Date website was queried)

## MORE INFORMATION

**PDF DATE**

27 May 2026