

GENERAL DESCRIPTION

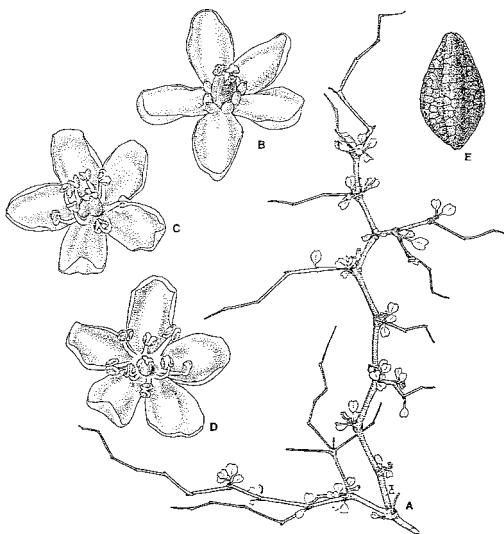
A rounded bushy deciduous divaricating shrub up to 3m in height. Zigzag branches form a compact, springy plant. Branchlets reddish brown, more or less interlacing but not twining. Bark on older branches dark grey/brown and furrowed. Small thin, broadly heart-shaped leaves occur in small clusters or alternately along the longer branchlets. It has separate male and female plants.

Flowers

Starts mid-August, peaking December to January (and may continue to April or May). Tiny flowers are greenish to white or pinkish white.

Fruits

December - March. The seed is a small dark three-angled nut with dull faces and is probably dispersed by several animals such as common gecko, blackbird and song thrush. The seed is surrounded by the remnants of the flower which may be swollen and succulent or dry.



Shrubby tororaro. A: Habit. B: Female flower. C: Hermaphrodite ("male") flower showing well developed gynoecium. D: Hermaphrodite ("male") flower showing smaller, non-functioning gynoecium. E: nut.

Illustration: Tim Galloway.

SIMILAR SPECIES

Muehlenbeckia complexa which is a scrambler, not a shrub and has twining, tangled orange-brown young stems with no distinct trunk nor thickened branches. The nut of *M. complexa* has shiny faces. At a distance, *Coprosma crassifolia* and *Sophora prostrata* are easily mistaken for shrubby tororaro.

OTHER NAMES

Shrubby tororaro is also known as wiggywig, pohue, pohuehue, mingimingi and shrub pohuehue. Some of these names are also used for other species.

CULTURAL IMPORTANCE

Shrubby tororaro is of significance to Maori as a Taonga (treasure) and as Rongoa (medicine).

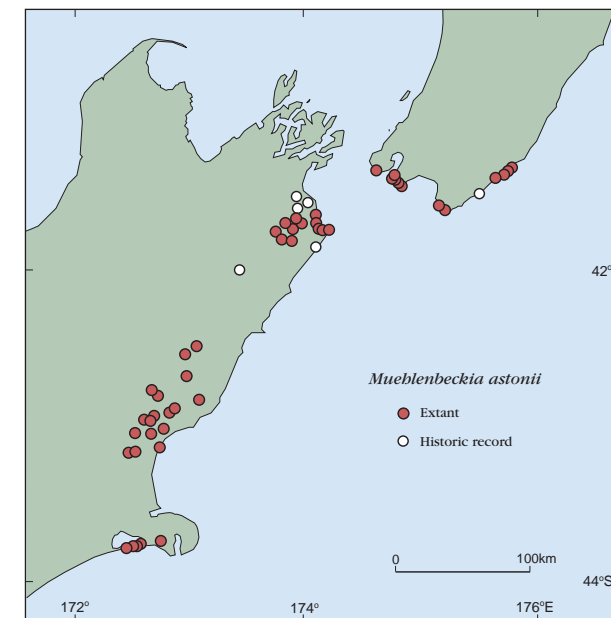
HABITAT

Muehlenbeckia astonii is associated with "grey" scrub communities, largely confined to drier lowland parts of eastern New Zealand. It is found on moderate to high fertility soils. The plant is often found in association with *Coprosma crassifolia*, *Coprosma propinqua*, *Muehlenbeckia complexa* (small-leaved pohuehue), *Discaria toumatou* (matagouri), *Olearia solandri* (coastal tree daisy), *Ozothamnus leptophyllus* (tauhinu) and *Rubus squarrosus* (leafless lawyer).



DISTRIBUTION

Shrubby tororaro occurs only in New Zealand (see map). It is found mainly in coastal areas from the southern part of the North Island to Canterbury, in the South Island. It is also found inland in drier parts of Marlborough and Canterbury.



CONSERVATION STATUS

Endangered

The survival in the wild of *Muehlenbeckia astonii* is threatened by lack of regeneration due to competition from exotic grasses, browsing animals and trampling. It is also threatened by loss of its original habitat through disturbance, fragmentation and fire.

Many of the shrubby tororaro that survive in the wild are single plants isolated from others of their species. Because male and female flowers occur on separate plants, these specimens have no opportunities to reproduce.

Photo: Cathy Jones.

HOW YOU CAN HELP

- Learn to recognise the plant.
- Tell staff at the Department of Conservation if you discover populations of the plant.
- Protect populations of the plant through fencing, weed control and supplementary planting.
- Plant *Muehlenbeckia astonii* and its associated species at new sites within the species known range.
- Use locally sourced plants in gardens, hedges and revegetation projects.

AVAILABILITY OF PLANTS

Muehlenbeckia astonii is available at several native plant nurseries throughout the country. The following plant nurseries sell *Muehlenbeckia astonii*. We suggest that when purchasing plants look for those cultivated from sources as close as possible to where you intend to use them.

North Island

- Plantwise (Richard Slow)
1 Summit Road, Lower Hutt. Tel: 04 567 1732.
Plants sourced from Fitroy Bay, Wellington Coast and Honeycomb Rock, Eastern Wairarapa.
- Talisman Nurseries Ltd (Alastair Turnbull)
Ringawhata Road, R.D. Otaki. Tel: 06 364 5893.
Plants sourced from Pencarrow, Wellington Coast.

South Island

- Adams Land Garden Centre and Nursery,
158 Battys Road, Blenheim. Tel: 03 578 1218.
South Marlborough sources.
- Broadleaf Nurseries (Miles and Gillian Giller),
308 Rangiora - Woodend Road, R.D. 1, Kaiapoi.
Tel: 03 313 5315.
Plants sourced from Waipara, north of Mount Grey (Hurunui). Kaitorete provenance is sometimes available.
- Kaikoura Nurseries Ltd,
Athelney Road, R.D. 1, Kaikoura. Tel: 03 319 5851.
South Marlborough sources.

- Morgans Road Nursery,
Morgans Rad, R.D. 3, Blenheim. Tel: 03 578 1412.
South Marlborough sources.
- Motukarara Nursery (Jorge Santos),
R.D. 2, Christchurch. Tel: 03 329 7846.
Can grow locally provenanced material on demand.

WHERE YOU CAN SEE THE PLANT IN CULTIVATION

- Otari Native Botanic Garden,
Wilton Road, P.O. Box 2199, Wellington.
Tel: 04 475 3245.
- Wellington Botanic Garden,
Glenmore Street, P.O. Box 2199, Wellington.
Tel: 04 801 3071.
- Christchurch Botanic Gardens,
P.O. Box 237, Christchurch. Tel: 03 379 1660.
- Wairarapa Area Office,
Department of Conservation,
South Rd, Masterton. Tel: 06 377 0700.
- South Marlborough Area Office,
Department of Conservation,
P.O. Box 51, Renwick, Blenheim. Tel: 03 572 9100.

MORE INFORMATION AND ADVICE

This leaflet was compiled and produced by the Department of Conservation. For more information about the ecology, distribution and conservation management of *Muehlenbeckia astonii* please contact:

Cathy Jones (Species Recovery Group Leader)
Nelson/Marlborough Conservancy
Department of Conservation
Private Bag 5, Nelson
New Zealand

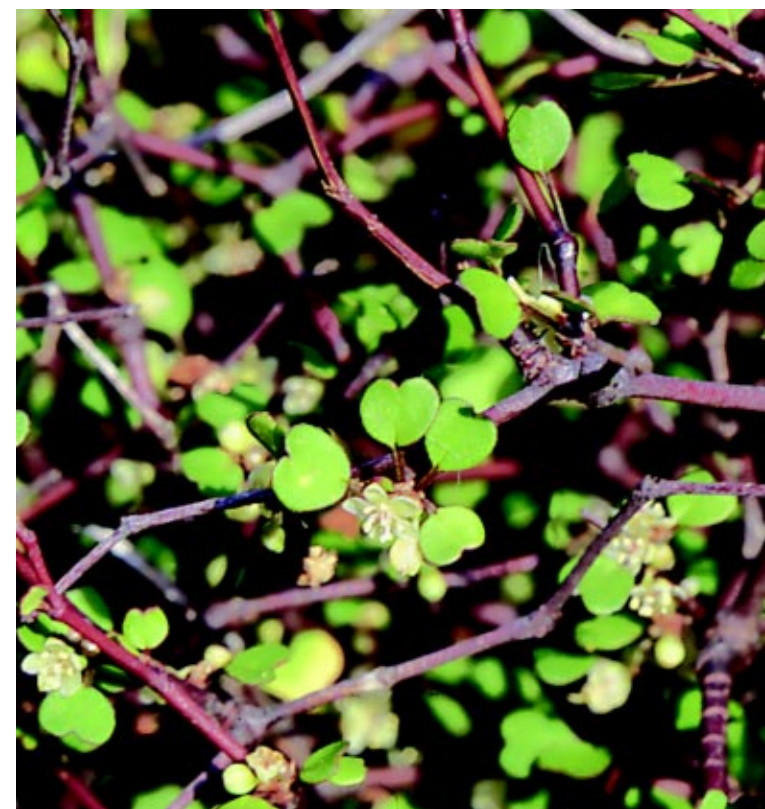
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Muehlenbeckia astonii

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Te Papa Atawhai