

Crassula ruamahanga

BIOSTATUS

Native

CATEGORY

Vascular

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Herbs - Dicotyledons other than Composites

FLOWER COLOURS

Red/Pink, White

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Perennial herb form small to large diffuse to dense bright green mats. Stems green or pink, prostrate, rooting at nodes, with ascending tips, much-branched. Leaves fused at base, 1.3-8 x 0.4-1.5 mm, 0.2-0.6 mm thick, lanceolate, linear-lanceolate or elliptic lanceolate, flattened or slightly concave above, convex beneath, apex usually sharply acute, shortly acuminate or apiculate, sometimes obtuse. Flowers solitary in leaf axils, scarcely fragrant, stellate, 4-merous, 1.8-2.5 mm diam.; pedicels 0.5-1 mm, scarcely elongating at fruiting, Calyx lobes 0.8-1 x 0.4-0.6 mm, triangular or triangular-ovate, white or pink-flushed, acute, sharply acute, occasionally obtuse, slightly or much > calyx. Scales 0.5 mm long, cuneate. Follicles smooth. Seed 0.5 mm long.

SIMILAR TAXA

Crassula hunua A.P.Druce, from which it is only doubtfully distinct. From that species it is best distinguished by the acute tipped leaves and petals, persistent presence of a leaf apiculus, and generally by the sepal length exceeding the petals. However these characters seem to intergrade with *C. hunua*.

DISTRIBUTION

Endemic. Uncommon, known from historic and extant records from Wairoa River near Dargaville south to Stewart Island and including Chatham Island. In the North Island most common in the Wairarapa, and in the South Island on the Southland plains

HABITAT

Sea level to lowland (rarely lower montane) (0-500 m a.s.l.). An opportunistic species which can be expected to occur in any suitably damp, open habitat. It has been collected from near estuarine conditions through to leaking pipes in urban centres, gravel foot paths, and bowling green turf. Its favoured habitat seems to be river sides and muddy hollows and pools within lowland alluvial forest.

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2023 | At Risk – Naturally Uncommon | Qualifiers: Sp, DPS, DPT

THREATS

Competition from other plants. Habitat destruction through heavy stock use, by cattle in particular.

DETAILED TAXONOMY

FAMILY

Crassulaceae

AUTHORITY

Crassula ruamahanga A.P.Druce emend de Lange et Heenan



Crassula ruamahanga. Photographer: Peter J. de Lange, Licence: CC BY-NC.



Crassula ruamahanga, Clevedon Bridge, Wairoa River, near Clevedon. Photographer: Peter J. de Lange, Licence: CC BY-NC.

SYNONYMS

Tillaea acutifolia Kirk, *Crassula acutifolia* (Kirk) A.P.Druce et D.R.Given non. *Crassula acutifolia* Lam.; *Crassula hunua* A.P.Druce; *Tillaea pusilla* Kirk var. *pusilla*, *Tillaea pusilla* var. *brevia* Kirk, *Crassula pusilla* A.P.Druce et D.R.Given non *C. pusilla* Schönland

TAXONOMIC NOTES

Crassula hunua is now included within *C. ruamahanga* (see: de Lange et al 2007)

ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes

ENDEMIC GENUS

No

ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

ECOLOGY

FLOWERING

Flowers may be present throughout the year

FRUITING

Flowers may be present throughout the year

LIFE CYCLE AND DISPERSAL

Minute follicles are dispersed by wind and water and possibly also by attachment (Thorsen et al., 2009).

PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

Easy from rooted pieces, stem cuttings and seed. Can become a troublesome weed in damp soils and shaded sites, but makes an excellent ground cover or lawn on poorly drained soils. Flowers are sweetly scented.

WETLAND PLANT INDICATOR STATUS RATING

FACW: Facultative Wetland

Usually is a hydrophyte but occasionally found in uplands (non-wetlands).

OTHER INFORMATION

PLANT OF THE MONTH

This plant has been featured as a Plant of the Month – see [Trilepidea: NZPCN newsletter for July 2004](#) for the full story.

ETYMOLOGY

crassula: From the Latin *crassus* 'thick', meaning 'rather thick'

CHROMOSOME NUMBER

2n = 42,64,70,84,90

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

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

2012 | At Risk – Naturally Uncommon | Qualifiers: Sp

2009 | At Risk – Naturally Uncommon

2004 | Sparse

REFERENCING AND CITATIONS

REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

de Lange, P.J.; Heenan, P.B.; Keeling, D.J.; Murray, B.G.; Smissen, R.; Sykes, W.R. 2008: Biosystematics and Conservation: A Case Study with Two Enigmatic and Uncommon Species of *Crassula* from New Zealand. *Annals of Botany* 101: 881-899

Thorsen, M. J.; Dickinson, K. J. M.; Seddon, P. J. 2009. Seed dispersal systems in the New Zealand flora. *Perspectives in Plant Ecology, Evolution and Systematics* 11: 285-309

ATTRIBUTION

Fact Sheet by P.J. de Lange 4 May 2005. Description from de Lange et al. (2009).

NZPCN FACT SHEET CITATION

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

MORE INFORMATION

<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/crassula-ruamahanga/>

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30 October 2024