

# Crassula ruamahanga

## 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

## FAMILY

Crassulaceae

## AUTHORITY

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

## FLORA CATEGORY

Vascular – Native

## ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes

## ENDEMIC GENUS

No

## ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

## STRUCTURAL CLASS

Herbs - Dicotyledons other than Composites

## CHROMOSOME NUMBER

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

## CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

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

## PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2012 | At Risk – Naturally Uncommon | Qualifiers: Sp

2009 | At Risk – Naturally Uncommon

2004 | Sparse

## 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.

## WETLAND PLANT INDICATOR STATUS RATING

FACW: Facultative Wetland

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



*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.

## 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*.

## FLOWERING

Flowers may be present throughout the year

## FLOWER COLOURS

Red/Pink, White

## FRUITING

Flowers may be present throughout the year

## LIFE CYCLE

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.

## THREATS

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

## ETYMOLOGY

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

## CULTURAL USE/IMPORTANCE

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

## ATTRIBUTION

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

## 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

## NZPCN FACT SHEET CITATION

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## MORE INFORMATION

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