

Leptecophylla robusta

COMMON NAMES

pouteretere

SYNONYMS

Cyathodes robusta Hook.f., *Cyathodes acerosa* var. *latifolia* Hook.f.,
Styphelia robusta (Hook.f.) Sleumer

FAMILY

Ericaceae

AUTHORITY

Leptecophylla robusta (Hook.f.) Weiller

FLORA CATEGORY

Vascular – Native

ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes

ENDEMIC GENUS

No

ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Trees & Shrubs - Dicotyledons

NVS CODE

LEPROB

CHROMOSOME NUMBER

2n = 20

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2017 | At Risk – Naturally Uncommon | Qualifiers: IE, RR

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2012 | At Risk – Naturally Uncommon | Qualifiers: IE, RR

2009 | At Risk – Naturally Uncommon | Qualifiers: IE

2004 | Range Restricted

SIMPLIFIED DESCRIPTION

Bushy prickly shrub bearing hard narrow sharp leaves that are white underneath and red to white fruit inhabiting the Chatham Islands. Leaves 12-20mm long by 3-7mm wide, green lines visible in the white underside of leaf.

DISTRIBUTION

Endemic. Chatham Islands: Rekohu (Chatham Island), Rangihaute (Pitt Island)

HABITAT

Coastal and inland in forest and scrub, also within restiad bog. Occasionally, such as on the southern tablelands, forming the forest canopy. Uncommon on sand and avoids active sand dune systems.

WETLAND PLANT INDICATOR STATUS RATING

FACW: Facultative Wetland

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



Rangaika, Chatham Islands. Photographer: John Smith-Dodsworth, Licence: CC BY-NC.



Southern Tableland, Chatham Island.
Photographer: Jeremy R. Rolfe, Date taken:
14/02/1985, Licence: CC BY.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Dioecious shrub or small tree to 8 m tall. Bark firm, dark grey to grey-brown, fibrous ± tessellated and deeply furrowed. Stems grey-brown or grey. Branchlets yellow-brown, orange-brown or brown, rounded, puberulent. Leaf buds prominent, glabrescent, hairs white, sericeous. Leaves erect or spreading, dark green, purple-green or bronze-green above, pale green or cream below, ovate or oblong, 9.9-16.2 × 2.2-3.4 mm wide, flat, apex obtuse, with a callus tip; margin recurved slightly, glabrous or ciliolate only at the apex, upper surface glabrous, lower surface with intervenal papillae and 6-8 conspicuous veins; petiole 1.3-2.8 mm long, upper surface puberulent. Flowers sickly-sweet fragrant, solitary, terminal and axillary, erect, pedicel of male flowers 3.1-4.1 mm long, 2.4-3.2 mm long in females; bracts triangular, 0.7-9.0 × 0.9-1.4 mm, apices obtuse, glabrous outside, ciliolate on the margins toward the apex; bracteoles and sepals glabrous, conspicuously striate when dry; bracteoles 9-12 per flower, imbricate, 1.7-2.2 × 1.5-2.1 mm; sepals ovate, 2.1-2.6 × 1.6-2.1 mm. Corolla tube white to cream, usually equal to calyx, thin U-shaped, 1.7-2.0 mm long; lobes white or cream, more or less equal to tube 1.7-2.1 mm long, apices broadly acute, glabrous or internally occasionally sparsely hairy. Anthers of male flowers 1.1-1.4 mm long, usually enclosed within the corolla; filaments 0.4-0.7 mm long. Ovary spherical 0.7-1.1 × 0.9-1.1 mm, glabrous, 4-5-celled; style straight, glabrous, tapering to the ovary, 1.1-1.4 mm long in males, 0.9-1.2 mm long in females; stigma 0.1 mm high; nectary continuous, 0.4-0.7 mm tall, upper margin usually coarsely toothed. Drupe red, pink or white, fleshy, spherical, 5-8 × 6-10 mm. Endocarp transversely broadly elliptic to transversely elliptic, terete 2.8-4.3 × 3.5-5.0 mm, with c.20 indistinct longitudinal ridges; apex rounded to an apiculate end; base rounded or obtuse, with a small hollow. Surface dark brown weathering to light brown, irregularly granular. Internally 2-5-celled, with up to 5 of these filled.

SIMILAR TAXA

Superficially similar to *Leptecophylla juniperina* (J.R.Forst. et G.Forst.) C.M.Weiller from which it differs by its restriction to the Chatham Islands; greater stature; and suberect to spreading leaves with blunt short apices, and which are veined > 5 times.

FLOWERING

August - October

FLOWER COLOURS

Cream, White

FRUITING

Throughout the year

PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

Difficult and should not be removed from the wild. Some people have successfully grown on plants transplanted from the wild, and cuttings, though slow can be struck. Seed will germinate but this can take 2-6 years. At all stages plants are prone to collapse and resent any disturbance of the roots.

THREATS

A naturally uncommon species abundant on the main Chatham Islands. It is not especially palatable and so persists in rough pasture and other land accessible to stock. It is mostly threatened by land clearance and its local use for fire wood.

ETYMOLOGY

robusta: Sturdy

ATTRIBUTION

Description modified from Weiller (1999). Endocarp description from Webb and Simpson (2001).

REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

Weiller, C.M. 1999: *Leptecophylla*, a new genus for species formerly included in *Cyathodes* (Epacridaceae). *Muelleria* 12: 195-214.

Webb, C.J.; Simpson, M.J.A. 2001: *Seeds of New Zealand – Gymnosperms & Dicotyledons*. Manuka Press, Christchurch.

NZPCN FACT SHEET CITATION

Please cite as: de Lange, P.J. (Year at time of access): *Leptecophylla robusta* Fact Sheet (content continuously updated). New Zealand Plant Conservation Network.

<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/leptecophylla-robusta/> (Date website was queried)

MORE INFORMATION

<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/leptecophylla-robusta/>

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17 September 2024