Androstoma empetrifolium

BIOSTATUS
Native – Endemic taxon

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS
2023 | Not Threatened
Jump to previous conservation statuses

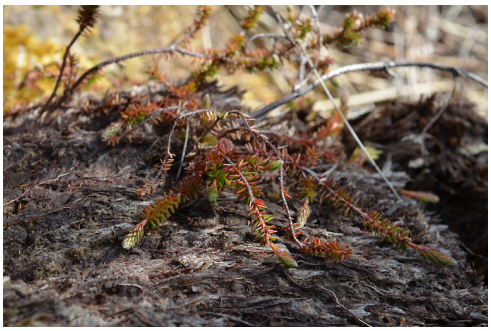
CATEGORY
Vascular

STRUCTURAL CLASS
Trees & Shrubs - Dicotyledons

SIMPLIFIED DESCRIPTION
Low-growing sprawling reddish shrub. Leaves spreading, small, curved, appearing blunt, reddish or dark green above (somewhat pubescent), undersides 3-veined (veins parallel), white, pubescent. Flower small, white, tubular, single or in small clusters. Fruit fleshy, white, pink or red, ovoid

DETAILED DESCRIPTION
Hermaphrodite, prostrate, semi-prostrate (decumbent) sometimes trailing, widely spreading woody shrubs up to 1.0 × 0.2 m. **Stems** spreading, brown, grey-brown or red-brown; branchlets red-brown, yellow-brown or brown, ribbed, pubescent. **Leaves** dark green, bronze-green, maroon adaxially, abaxially pubescent, alternate, evenly spaced, ± spreading, erect or reflexed, shedding along branchlets, and absent on main stems; petiolate, petiole erect, ± appressed, 0.5-0.9 mm long, glabrous; lamina linear, 2.3–4.8 × 0.6–1.1 mm, coriaceous, convex (rarely flat); apex obtuse surmounted by a minute callus; margin recurved, glabrous or ciliate; adaxially ± glossy, glabrous or finely pubescent; abaxially pubescent with hairs either confined to interveinal grooves or pubescent overall, striate, veins 3 parallel, conspicuous, abaxially strongly ribbed. **Inflorescences** terminal, 1–3-flowered,terminating in a rudimentary bud. **Flowers** pendulous, subtended by a single bract and 2 prominently keeled bracteoles, not pedicellate above bracteoles so appearing spicate; pedicel 0.4–1 mm long; bract, bracteoles, and sepals ovate or oblong, obtuse, glabrous or rarely puberulent outside; bract 0.5–0.9 × 0.5 mm, margin ciliolate; bracteoles non-imbricate, uniform in size, 0.8–1.5 × 0.7–1 mm, conspicuously striate particularly when dry, margin ciliate; sepals 1.3–1.9 × 0.8–1.1 mm, margin ciliate, bearing stomata on the adaxial surface (with a few present within hair-bearing clefts on the abaxial surface). **Corolla tube** ≤ calyx, thin, campanulate, 1.1–1.6 mm long, inner portion of tube glabrous; lobes spreading, acute, equalling the tube, 1.0–1.5 mm long, sparsely puberulent to puberulent towards apices. **Anthers** emarginate, 0.3–0.5 mm long, apically attached by a short thin filament inserted just below sinus of corolla tube; the filaments exserted, 0.3–0.5 mm long. **Ovary** 3–4-locular, spherical to ovoid, glabrous, 0.5–1.0 × 0.5–0.8 mm wide; style straight, glabrous, 0.5–0.8 mm long; stigma 0.1 mm long exserted. **Nectary** annular deeply lobed, occasionally comprised of distinct scales, these 0.2–0.4 mm tall, glabrous. **Fruit** red (occasionally white or pink), 2.0–3.0 × 1.5–2 mm, glabrous. **Endocarp** 1.6–2.3 × 1.6–2.1 mm, brown, orange to ornage-brown, broadly elliptic to ovoid, obscurely 3-angled, often longitudinally ridged, somewhat granular.

Te Moehau, March. Photographer: John Smith-Dodsworth, Licence: CC BY-NC.



Auckland Islands. Photographer: Jane Gosden, Licence: CC BY-NC-SA.

SIMILAR TAXA
None.

DISTRIBUTION
Endemic. North Island (from Te Moehau and Mt Pirongia south), South Island, Stewart Island/Rakiura, Chatham Islands, Auckland Islands and Campbell Island/Motu Ihupuku.

HABITAT
Coastal to alpine (montane to alpine in northern part of range otherwise extending to sea level). A species of open shrubland, tussock grassland, peat bogs and other poorly drained sites, as well as mixed alpine and subalpine herbfield. It is also frequently found on ridgelines on poorly draining, skeletal soils and on rock outcrops.

GENUS
Androstoma

FAMILY
Ericaceae

AUTHORITY
Androstoma empetrifolium Hook.f.

SYNONYMS
Cyathodes empetrifolia (Hook.f.) Hook.f., Styphelia taxifolia Sleumer, Styphelia androstoma F.Muell. (nom. illegit.), Styphelia hookeri F.Muell. (nom. illegit.)

TAXONOMIC NOTES
Until recently *Androstoma* had been treated as a monotypic and endemic genus (Hooker 1844; Weiller 1996). In 2005 a further Australian (Tasmania) endemic species that had been variously referred to *Pentachondra*, *Trochocarpa*, *Styphelia* and *Leucopogon*, was transferred to *Androstoma* as *A. verticillata* (Hook.f.) C.J.Quinn (Quinn et al. 2005). *Androstoma empetrifolium* was treated as *Cyathodes empetrifolia* (Hook.f.) Hook.f. by Allan (1961)

ENDEMIC TAXON
Yes

ENDEMIC GENUS
No

ENDEMIC FAMILY
No

FLOWERING
November–January

FRUITING
January–August

LIFE CYCLE AND DISPERSAL
Fleshy drupes are dispersed by frugivory (Thorsen et al., 2009).

PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE
Difficult. Should not be removed from the wild.

WETLAND PLANT INDICATOR STATUS RATING
FACW: Facultative Wetland
Usually is a hydrophyte but occasionally found in uplands (non-wetlands).

NVS CODE
ANDEMP

CHROMOSOME NUMBER
2n = 24

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2017 | Not Threatened
2012 | Not Threatened
2009 | Not Threatened
2004 | Not Threatened
Jump to current conservation status

REGIONAL CONSERVATION STATUSES

Otago: 2025 | Regionally Not Threatened Help
The regional threat classification system leverages off the national assessments in the NZTCS, providing information relevant for the regional context. Otago conservation status information is sourced from the "Conservation Status of Indigenous Vascular Plants in Otago, 2025" Jarvie S et al. (2025) report.

REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

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Quinn CJ, Brown EA, Heslewood MM, Crayn DM. 2005. Generic concepts in Styphelieae (Ericaceae): the *Cyathodes* group. *Australian Systematic Botany 18(5)*: 439–454. https://doi.org/10.1071/SB05005.
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Weiller CM. 1996. Reinstatement of the genus *Androstoma* Hook.f. (Epacridaceae). *New Zealand Journal of Botany 34(2)*: 179–185. https://doi.org/10.1080/0028825X.1996.10410681.

ATTRIBUTION

Fact Sheet prepared for the NZPCN by P.J. de Lange (19 November 2014). Description based on Weiller (1996), Quinn et al (2005), Webb & Simpson (2001) and observations made from fresh and dried specimens

NZPCN FACT SHEET CITATION

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https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/androstoma-empetrifolium/ (Date website was queried)

MORE INFORMATION

https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/androstoma-empetrifolium/

PDF DATE

27 May 2026