

# Coprosma acutifolia

## SYNONYMS

None (first described in 1856)

## FAMILY

Rubiaceae

## AUTHORITY

*Coprosma acutifolia* Hook.f.

## FLORA CATEGORY

Vascular – Native

## ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes

## ENDEMIC GENUS

No

## ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

## STRUCTURAL CLASS

Trees & Shrubs - Dicotyledons

## NVS CODE

COPACU

## CHROMOSOME NUMBER

2n = 44

## CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2017 | At Risk – Naturally Uncommon | Qualifiers: CD, IE, OL

## PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2012 | At Risk – Naturally Uncommon | Qualifiers: CD, IE, OL

2009 | At Risk – Naturally Uncommon | Qualifiers: IE

2004 | Range Restricted

## BRIEF DESCRIPTION

Bushy small tree with opposite pairs of wavy leaves inhabiting the Kermadec Islands. Leaves thin, with small pits at junction of veins, sharp-pointed, 6–7.5cm long, with a small long-tipped scale between the base of the leaf stems. Fruit orange, with black tip.

## DISTRIBUTION

Endemic. Raoul Island (Kermadec Island group) only

## HABITAT

Metrosideros-dominated forest - in both wet and dry associations. Ranging from almost sea level (where its distribution overlaps with *Coprosma petiolata*) to the highest point on the island (Moumoukai 520 m a.s.l.). A common understorey tree in dry and wet forest, becoming at times a moderately important canopy species along the summit ridges of Raoul.



*Coprosma acutifolia*. Photographer: Department of Conservation, Licence: Public domain.



Raoul Island. May 2009. Photographer: Peter J. de Lange, Licence: CC BY-NC.

## DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Tree up to 12 m tall; branches ascending; branchlets slender, glabrous. Bark greenish-grey maturing grey, flaking in small rectangular tissue-thin shards. Leaves on slender petioles 5-7 mm long. Stipules membranous, sheathing, sub-acute; denticle prominent. Lamina membranous, glabrous, 60-90 × 20-35 mm, yellow-green, often mottled with dark green, narrow-ovate, ovate, ovate-elliptic to lanceolate, acuminate, tapering to petiole; margins undulose. Reticulated veins fine, evident. Male flowers 3-9 on slender axillary branched peduncles 10-15 mm long; calyx cupular, teeth 4-5, acute; corolla subfunneliform, lobes 5, acute, more or less = tube; stamens 4-5. Female flowers 3 in a cluster on branched axillary peduncles; calyx cupular, teeth triangular, usually 5; corolla tubular, lobes linear-triangular, < tube. Drupe orange-red, oblong, 7-8 mm long

## MANAAKI WHENUA ONLINE INTERACTIVE KEY

Key to Coprosma species of New Zealand

## SIMILAR TAXA

The allopatric sister species of *Coprosma acutifolia* is the North Island endemic *C. tenuifolia*. This species differs from *C. acutifolia* by its smaller stature (up to 5 m cf. 12 m tall); by its larger (70-110 × 30-45 mm), ovate to oblong, acute, usually apiculate leaves which are coloured dull dark green, red-green or variously blotched, tinged or blemished with red, maroon or purple. The leaves of *Coprosma acutifolia* are 60-90 × 20-35 mm, yellow-green, often mottled with dark green, narrow-ovate, ovate, ovate-elliptic to lanceolate, acuminate. The peduncles of *Coprosma tenuifolia* are unbranched while those of *C. acutifolia* are pedicellate (branched). The fruits of *Coprosma acutifolia* are oblong and orange red rather than ovoid and orange. Both species hybridise readily when grown together in cultivation.

## FLOWERING

March - July

## FLOWER COLOURS

Green, White

## FRUITING

September - January

## LIFE CYCLE

Fleshy drupes are dispersed by frugivory (Thorsen et al., 2009).

## PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

Easy from semi-hard wood cuttings and fresh seed. Moderately frost-hardy. A very fast growing and attractive small tree, preferring a well drained, fertile soil. Does best planted in full sun in a warm frost-free situation. Hybridises readily when planted near other *Coprosma* species.

## THREATS

A local endemic abundant on Raoul Island

## ETYMOLOGY

**coprosma:** From the Greek kopros 'dung' and osme 'smell', referring to the foul smell of the species, literally 'dung smell'

**acutifolia:** From the Latin acutus 'sharp' and folius 'leaf', with pointed leaves

## WHERE TO BUY

Occasionally offered by specialist native plant nurseries

## ATTRIBUTION

Description adapted from Allan (1961)

## REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

Allan, H.H. 1961: Flora of New Zealand. Vol. I, Government Printer, Wellington

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/coprosma-acutifolia/>