

Coprosma areolata

COMMON NAMES

thin-leaved coprosma

BIOSTATUS

Native – Endemic taxon

CATEGORY

Vascular

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Trees & Shrubs - Dicotyledons

SIMPLIFIED DESCRIPTION

Common bushy tall shrub with pairs of small thin pointed leaves. Twigs hairy. Leaves thin, veins visible, tapering to both the sharp tip and leaf stalk, with small pit at junction of veins, in pairs with a small long-tipped scale between the base of the leaf stems. Fruit dark purple.

FLOWER COLOURS

Green

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Shrub or tree up to 3 (-5) m tall, leafy appearance. **Branches** slender, usually fastigiate, bark grey to fawn-grey; **branchlets** finely pubescent, pale fawn. **Leaves** yellow-green to brown-green, fascicled on short branchlets; petioles slender, finely pubescent to pilose, winged 3-7 mm long. **Stipules** small, obtuse, pubescent to pilose, with conspicuous sharp dark denticle. **Lamina** membranous, glabrous or nearly so above, sparsely pubescent below, broad-elliptic to obovate, acute to sub-acuminate, apiculate, cuneately narrowed to base, more or less 9-10 (-17) x 7-10 mm. Reticulated veins evident above and below. **Flowers**, dioecious, solitary or 2-4 together, terminal on short branchlets. Male flower without calyx; corolla broad-funnelform, lobes ovate, acute, more or less equal to tube. Female flower with minute calyx-teeth; corolla sub-campanulate, lobes more or less equal to tube. **Drupe** dark purple to almost black, globose, 4-5 mm diameter.

SIMILAR TAXA

Coprosma rotundifolia has rounder, hairier, thicker leaves lacking an obvious network of veins (often with purple blotches), and orange fruit.

C. tenuicaulis, which also has prominent vein networks and black round fruit, can be distinguished by a conspicuous terminal tuft of hairs on the stipule. The leaves are thicker in *C. tenuicaulis* and much less hairy, and the stems are long and slender between the leaf clusters.

C. virescens has leaves less obviously netted with veins, hairless leaf stalks, distinctively patterned bark on trunks and larger branches, usually 3 denticles at the tip of each stipule, and a yellowish white, oblong drupe.

DISTRIBUTION

North, South and Stewart Islands.

HABITAT

Lowland to lower montane forest.

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2023 | Not Threatened

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Kennedy Bay, September. Photographer: John Smith-Dodsworth, Licence: CC BY-NC.



At Kennedy Bay, September. Photographer: John Smith-Dodsworth, Licence: CC BY-NC.

DETAILED TAXONOMY

FAMILY

Rubiaceae

AUTHORITY

Coprosma areolata Cheeseman

ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes

ENDEMIC GENUS

No

ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

ECOLOGY

FLOWERING

October-December

FRUITING

(November-) December-April

LIFE CYCLE AND DISPERSAL

Unlike many *Coprosma* spp. which may occasionally have hermaphrodite flowers present, this species is regarded as strictly dioecious. Fleshy drupes are dispersed by frugivory (Thorsen et al., 2009).

WETLAND PLANT INDICATOR STATUS RATING

FACU: Facultative Upland

Occasionally is a hydrophyte but usually occurs in uplands (non-wetlands).

OTHER INFORMATION

ETYMOLOGY

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

areolata: Netted, with a network pattern between the veins

MANAAKI WHENUA ONLINE INTERACTIVE KEY

[Key to *Coprosma* species of New Zealand](#)

NVS CODE

COPARE

CHROMOSOME NUMBER

2n = 44

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2017 | Not Threatened

2012 | Not Threatened

2009 | Not Threatened

2004 | Not Threatened

[Jump to current conservation status](#)

REGIONAL CONSERVATION STATUSES

Otago: 2024 | Regionally Not Threatened | Qualifiers: TL

REFERENCING AND CITATIONS

REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

- Allan, H. H. 1961. Flora of New Zealand. Vol. 1. Wellington: Government Printer. pg. 578-579, 587.
- 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.
- Wilson, H. D., & Galloway, T. 1993. Small-leaved shrubs of New Zealand. Manuka Press. pg. 86-87.

ATTRIBUTION

Fact sheet prepared for NZPCN by M. Ward (8 December 2021). Description from Allan (1961), and Wilson & Galloway (1993).

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MORE INFORMATION

<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/coprosma-areolata/>

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