

Coprosma cuneata

BIOSTATUS

Native – Endemic taxon

CATEGORY

Vascular

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Trees & Shrubs - Dicotyledons

SIMPLIFIED DESCRIPTION

Shrub with many clusters of small dark green narrow leaves that are dented at the tip on very short side branches. Leaves curved, 9-16mm long by 2mm wide, widest at tip, with a tuft of small hairs between the base of the pairs of leaves. Fruit red, persisting.

FLOWER COLOURS

Green

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Slender shrub up to 1 m tall, flattened or sprawling in exposed sites.

Branches flexible, with dark to very dark brown bark; branchlets usually finely pubescent when young. **Leaves** usually in rather distant pairs or fascicles, petioles very slender, 1–2–(3) mm long. **Stipules** oblong-triangular, subacute to obtuse, pubescent, ciliate, with apical tuft of long hairs. **Lamina** subcoriaceous, glabrous, linear to very narrow-cuneate, more or less curved, truncate to obtuse, more or less retuse, sometimes mucronulate, (6)–10–16 × (0.5)–2–(3) mm. **Midrib** evident below, usually impressed above. **Flowers** unisexual. **Male flower** solitary or 2–4 together, terminal on short branchlets, calyx not present; corolla funnelform, tube more or less equal to narrow acute lobes. **Female flower** solitary, terminal; calyx-teeth very short; corolla narrow-funnelform, lobes narrow, acute, more or less equal to tube. **Drupe** clear red, globose, 3–5 mm diameter.

SIMILAR TAXA

Coprosma cheesemanii has pointed leaves and pale bark.

Coprosma crenulata has much more leathery, broader leaves, light grey bark, and short 3-toothed stipules.

Coprosma microcarpa lacks the indented leaf tips and has small white fruit.

Coprosma linariifolia has distinctive long-sheathing stipules, unique from any other small-leaved forms of that species, and also has pointed leaves, and fruit that is white. or white sprinkled with blue-black flecks.

Coprosma acerosa and its relatives all lack the indented leaf tips and have fruit coloured bright blue, rarely white, often flecked with darker blue.

DISTRIBUTION

South Island, Stewart Island/Rakiura, Auckland Islands, and Campbell Island/Motu Ihupuku.

HABITAT

Lowland to subalpine forest, scrub and shrubland, 0–1000 m.

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2023 | Not Threatened

[Jump to previous conservation statuses](#)



Dart Valley, Otago. Photographer: Jesse Bythell, Date taken: 23/03/2012, Licence: CC BY-NC.



Stewart Island. Photographer: Melissa Hutchison, Date taken: 27/01/2021, Licence: CC BY-NC.

DETAILED TAXONOMY

FAMILY

Rubiaceae

AUTHORITY

Coprosma cuneata Hook.f.

SYNONYMS

Coprosma astonii Petrie

TAXONOMIC NOTES

In the past, South Island and Stewart Island/Rakiura plants were known as *Coprosma astonii*, but they are not specifically distinct from those further south.

ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes

ENDEMIC GENUS

No

ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

ECOLOGY

FLOWERING

September–October

FRUITING

(December)–January–May

LIFE CYCLE AND DISPERSAL

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

OTHER INFORMATION

ETYMOLOGY

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

cuneata: From the Latin cuneum 'wedge', meaning wedge-shaped

MANAAKI WHENUA ONLINE INTERACTIVE KEY

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

NVS CODE

COPCUN

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 HH. 1961. Flora of New Zealand, Volume I. Indigenous Tracheophyta: Psilopsida, Lycopsidea, Filicopsida, Gymnospermae, Dicotyledones. Government Printer, Wellington, NZ. 1085 p.
- Thorsen MJ, Dickinson KJM, Seddon PJ. 2009. Seed dispersal systems in the New Zealand flora. *Perspectives in Plant Ecology, Evolution and Systematics 11*: 285–309.
- Wilson HD, Galloway T. 1993. Small-leaved shrubs of New Zealand. Manuka Press, Christchurch, NZ. 305 p.

ATTRIBUTION

Description adapted by M. Ward from Allan (1961) and Wilson & Galloway (1993).

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MORE INFORMATION

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

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