

# Coprosma robusta

## COMMON NAMES

karamū, glossy karamū

## BIOSTATUS

Native – Endemic taxon

## CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2023 | Not Threatened

[Jump to previous conservation statuses](#)

## CATEGORY

Vascular

## STRUCTURAL CLASS

Trees & Shrubs - Dicotyledons

## SIMPLIFIED DESCRIPTION

Large bushy shrub with pairs of glossy leaves which have a small dark-tipped flap on the stem between the leaf bases. Leaves 7–12cm long, with a prominent ridge up the middle underneath and a furrow up the middle above. Fruit red, in tight clusters along twigs.

## FLOWER COLOURS

Green, White

## DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Shrub or small tree up to 6 m tall. **Branches** numerous, stout, erect to somewhat spreading. **Petioles** stout, 10–20 mm long. **Stipules** fused towards base, obtuse, glabrous with one of two prominent, black, glandular denticles. **Leaves** 70–120 × 30–40–50 mm, leathery, dark green above, paler green beneath, glabrous, elliptic, elliptic-oblong to broad-ovate, acute or obtuse, apex mucronate. Venation reticulated, conspicuous. **Male flowers** in axillary many-flowered glomerules, corolla conspicuous, lobes triangular, acute, stamens 4–5, prominent. **Female flowers** in compound clusters on peduncles 10–15 mm. Calyx and corolla much reduced, stigmas prominent. **Drupe** dark orange (rarely yellow), 8–8 × 4–5 mm, oblong to narrow-ovoid. **Seeds** 2, pyrene, narrowly elliptic to elliptic, 4.2–6.5(-7) × 2–3 mm, in cross-section semilunar.

## SIMILAR TAXA

Easily distinguished from all the other lowland, large-leaved *Coprosma* spp., by the seemingly entire leaves, which are finely toothed along the margins—this can be felt by dragging a finger tips along the leaf edge. Perhaps closest to *Coprosma macrocarpa subsp. minor*, with which it freely hybridizes, and from which the more simple leaf venation (not so reticulate), finely toothed leaf margins are useful distinctions.

## DISTRIBUTION

Endemic. Te Ika-a-Māui | North Island and Te Waipounamu | South Island south to Banks Peninsula. Naturalised populations occur in Otago and Southland (typically around planting sites) and also Rēkohu | Wharekauri | Chatham Island within a small area between Waitangi and Owenga.

## HABITAT

Common throughout coastal, lowland and lower montane habitats within shrublands and open sites within forest.



Pistillate flowers. Boulder Hill, western Hutt hills, Lower Hutt. Photographer: Jeremy R. Rolfe, Date taken: 13/11/2004, Licence: CC BY.



Pistillate flowers. Boulder Hill, western Hutt hills, Lower Hutt. Photographer: Jeremy R. Rolfe, Date taken: 13/11/2004, Licence: CC BY.

## GENUS

Coprosma

## FAMILY

Rubiaceae

## AUTHORITY

Coprosma robusta Raoul

## SYNONYMS

?Coprosma coffaeoides Colenso

## ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes

## ENDEMIC GENUS

No

## ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

## FLOWERING

(July-) August - September (-November)

## FRUITING

(March-) April - May (-July)

## PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

Very easy from fresh seed. Also easy from semi-hardwood cuttings. Fast growing and inclined to become weedy.

## WETLAND PLANT INDICATOR STATUS RATING

FACU: Facultative Upland

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

## CULTIVATION

Not commonly cultivated but often naturalising from urban indigenous vegetation restoration sites (sometimes where it has been planted erroneously beyond its natural range). Fruit are dispersed by birds. Heavily fruiting females (which are often apomictic) can be very spectacular. Known to hybridise with other Coprosma species such as *C. macrocarpa* subsp. *minor* and *C. propinqua*.

## ETYMOLOGY

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

**robusta:** Sturdy

## MANAAKI WHENUA ONLINE INTERACTIVE KEY

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

## NVS CODE

COPROB

## 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

Auckland: 2025 | Regionally Not Threatened | Qualifiers: DPS, DPT Help

The regional threat classification system leverages off the national assessments in the NZTCS, providing information relevant for the regional context. Auckland conservation status information is sourced from the "Conservation status of vascular plant species in Tāmaki Makaurau / Auckland" Simpkins E et al. (2025) report.

## 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.

## ATTRIBUTION

Fact sheet prepared by Peter J. de Lange (30 August 2004). Description adapted from Allan (1961).

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## MORE INFORMATION

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

## PDF DATE

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