

Australina pusilla subsp. pusilla

SYNONYMS

Australina novae-zelandiae Hook.f.

FAMILY

Urticaceae

AUTHORITY

Australina pusilla Gaudich. subsp. *pusilla*

FLORA CATEGORY

Vascular – Native

ENDEMIC TAXON

No

ENDEMIC GENUS

No

ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Herbs - Dicotyledons other than Composites

NVS CODE

AUSPUS

CHROMOSOME NUMBER

2n=24

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2017 | Not Threatened | Qualifiers: SO

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2012 | Not Threatened

2009 | Not Threatened

2004 | Not Threatened

DISTRIBUTION

Indigenous. New Zealand.: North, South, Stewart and Chatham Islands. In the North Island (local north of Auckland, common elsewhere). Abundant in the South Island.

Known also from Australia (Victoria and Tasmania).

HABITAT

Coastal to montane. Usually in dense riparian forest where it colonises the ground. Often found growing admixed with bitter cresses (*Cardamine* spp.), nettles (*Urtica incisa*) and forest sedges like *Isolepis reticularis* and *Schoenus maschalinus*.



Coromandel, October. Photographer: John Smith-Dodsworth, Licence: CC BY-NC.



In cultivation ex Motu Falls. Photographer: Jeremy R. Rolfe, Date taken: 19/10/2007, Licence: CC BY.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Dark green to grass green perennial herb producing numerous prostrate and ascending stems, up to 250 mm high and 0.8-1.5 mm diameter. Young stems, petioles and peduncles with an indumentum of stiff, appressed hairs or occasionally also with finer, more erect hairs. Leaves alternate, petiolate; stipules 0.5-1.0 mm long, linear to lanceolate, sometimes ciliate, up to 1 mm long; petiole up to 1.0-1.4(-11.0) mm long; lamina 11-16 x 12-16 mm, orbicular (sometimes broader than long), base cuneate or truncate, margin with 1-4 blunt or rounded teeth, apical tooth almost always broader than long, with 2-4 pairs of lateral nerves, usually glabrous on both sides, occasionally with lines of appressed hairs between the veins, and abaxially sometimes with scattered, appressed hairs on the veins. Male inflorescences 1-3-flowered, usually restricted to the axils of the upper leaves (rarely terminal), borne on pubescent or glabrescent peduncles up to 6 mm long. Flowers up to 1.0 x 1.5 mm, densely pubescent to subglabrous. Female inflorescences 1-9-flowered, sessile. axillary in the leaf axils below those of the male inflorescences. Flowers symmetrical, slightly flattened, with 4 ± marked ridges, subglabrous, apex with 2 marked teeth between which the filiform style protrudes. Fruit an achene, enclosed in a persistent perianth; purple-brown, dark purple-brown to almost black, glabrous, 0.8-1.2 mm long, broadly ovate, sometimes elliptic, obovate or almost circular, asymmetric, biconvex, apex rounded to a narrow pointed (sometimes curved) projection, base rounded to a short, tapering, rounded or flattened, often curved projection, surface dull or shiny, densely papillate or colliculate.

SIMILAR TAXA

None.

FLOWERING

September - December

FLOWER COLOURS

Cream

FRUITING

December - April

PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

Easy from division or whole plants, rooted pieces, tip cuttings and fresh seed

THREATS

Not Threatened. However scarce north of the Waikato.

ETYMOLOGY

australina: From the Latin australis meaning southern.

pusilla: Small

WHERE TO BUY

Not commercially available

TAXONOMIC NOTES

The status of *Australina pusilla* needs further investigation. Friis & Wilmot-Dear (1988) accept *A. pusilla* from New Zealand and Australia (the type is from Australia) and recognise two subspecies. *Australina pusilla* subsp. *pusilla* is indigenous to Australia and New Zealand, and subsp. *muelleri* is endemic to Australia. In New Zealand we may have two forms of *Australina pusilla* - Webb & Simpson (2001) noted seed differences between northern and southern New Zealand populations and Chatham Island plants of *A. pusilla* seem to be distinct from the rest of New Zealand. Further *A. pusilla* subsp. *muelleri* has a range that overlaps with subsp. *pusilla*, and it seems morphologically very different. Additional study, possibly using DNA-based methodologies and cytological studies may be useful in elevating these differences.

ATTRIBUTION

Fact sheet prepared for NZPCN by P.J. de Lange (18 February 2013). Description adapted from Friis & Wilmot-Dear (1988) and Webb & Simpson (2001).

REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

Anonymous. 1955. Botanical at home *Australina pusilla*. *Auckland Botanical Society Journal*, 13: 5-6.

Friis, I.; Wilmot-Dear, C.M. 1988: A revision of the tribe Forsskaoleae (Urticaceae). *Nordic Journal of Botany* 8: 25-59.

Webb, C.J.; Simpson, M.J.A. 2011: Seeds of New Zealand Gymnosperms and Dicotyledons. Christchurch, Manuka Press.

NZPCN FACT SHEET CITATION

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<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/australina-pusilla-subsp-pusilla/> (Date website was queried)

MORE INFORMATION

<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/australina-pusilla-subsp-pusilla/>