

Hibiscus richardsonii

COMMON NAMES

native hibiscus, puarangi

SYNONYMS

Has been erroneously referred to *Hibiscus trionum* L.

FAMILY

Malvaceae

AUTHORITY

Hibiscus richardsonii Lindl.

FLORA CATEGORY

Vascular – Native

ENDEMIC TAXON

Indeterminate

ENDEMIC GENUS

No

ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Herbs - Dicotyledons other than Composites

CHROMOSOME NUMBER

2n = 28

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2017 | Threatened – Nationally Critical | Qualifiers: CD, DP, EF, Sp, TO

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2012 | Threatened – Nationally Critical | Qualifiers: CD, EF, Sp, TO

2009 | Threatened – Nationally Critical | Qualifiers: EF, Sp, TO

2004 | Threatened – Nationally Endangered

DISTRIBUTION

Indigenous. New Zealand, North Island, from Te Pahi eastward to Hicks Bay, including Great Barrier and Mayor (Tuhua) Islands. Also Australia (New South Wales)

HABITAT

Strictly coastal, growing in recently disturbed habitats, such as around slip scars, within petrel colonies, on talus slopes, and under open coastal scrub and forest. At Mayor (Tuhua) Island it is associated with an old pa site. The seed is long-lived, and has a persistent seed bank, such that this species often appears following major habitat disturbances caused by storm damage or fire



Mature capsule after dehiscence, showing calyx and epicalyx. Photographer: Jeremy R. Rolfe, Date taken: 29/08/2007, Licence: CC BY.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Annual to short-lived perennial herb up to 1 m tall. Stems densely clothed in stellate hairs when young becoming glabrescent with age. Lower leaves puberulent, suborbicular, entire to finely serrated, stem leaves pale green at first becoming purple-red with age, palmately 3-5-lobed, 10-60 mm long, puberulent, segments finely serrated (rather deeply serrated). Flowers solitary and axillary, rarely pseudoterminal; epicalyx segments (8-)10-13, free to near base, linear-lanceolate, calyx deeply campanulate; calyx teeth ovate-triangular, somewhat < tube in length. Petals (5)-10(-15) mm long, uniformly white, cream to very pale yellow, basally sometimes with pale reddish-pink striations. Capsule long persistent, with papery calyx. Seeds 1.5-2 mm, finely papillate

SIMILAR TAXA

A naturalised race of *Hibiscus trionum* is often confused with *H. richardsonii* (see de Lange et al. 2010; Craven et al. 2011). It has larger, more deeply divided and lobed leaves, much larger pale-yellow to yellow flowers which open fully, petals which are consistently and distinctly basally blotched dark brown, purple-red or maroon, and larger seeds.

FLOWERING

(September-) October - May

FLOWER COLOURS

Cream, White

FRUITING

(September-) June (potentially all year round)

LIFE CYCLE

Seeds are dispersed by wind and possibly granivory (Thorsen et al., 2009).

PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

Easy from seed. A short-lived perennial which behaves as an annual in colder climates. Frost-sensitive. Does best in an open, sunny situation. can be somewhat weedy, and has a very persistent seed-bank

THREATS

Hibiscus richardsonii is very palatable to stock, and it is prone to being outcompeted by faster growing and taller weeds. As a species requiring open ground it is especially vulnerable to this threat. Previously regarded (as *Hibiscus* aff. *trionum* (AK 218967; New Zealand)) as Nationally Critical in de Lange et al. (2009)

ETYMOLOGY

hibiscus: Name of very ancient origin used by the Roman poet Virgil for the marsh mallow plant.

ATTRIBUTION

Description based on de Lange et al. (2010). Fact sheet prepared by P.J. de Lange (September 2009)

REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

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- 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/hibiscus-richardsonii/>

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