

Acaena tesca

COMMON NAME

bidibid, piripiri

SYNONYMS

None (described in 1991)

FAMILY

Rosaceae

AUTHORITY

Acaena tesca B.H.Macmill.

FLORA CATEGORY

Vascular – Native

ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes

ENDEMIC GENUS

No

ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Herbs - Dicotyledons other than Composites

NVS CODE

ACATES

CHROMOSOME NUMBER

2n = 42

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2017 | Not Threatened

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2012 | Not Threatened | Qualifiers: Sp

2009 | At Risk – Naturally Uncommon

2004 | Range Restricted

DISTRIBUTION

Endemic. New Zealand: South Island (Central Otago and northern Southland - Crown, Pisa, Dunstan, Ida, Old Woman, and Old Man Ranges, Garvie and Umbrella Mountains)

HABITAT

Subalpine to alpine. In *Chionochloa* Zotov tussock grassland, around rock outcrops and between tussocks; also in induced *Poa colensoi* Hook.f. herbfield; herbfield close to seepages, and in fellfield.

WETLAND PLANT INDICATOR STATUS RATING

FAC: Facultative

Commonly occurs as either a hydrophyte or non-hydrophyte (non-wetlands).



Growing with *Agrostis capillaris*. Photographer: Kelvin Lloyd, Licence: All rights reserved.



Old Woman Range. Photographer: Kelvin Lloyd, Licence: All rights reserved.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Low-growing or mat-forming suffruticose perennial, with dark brown subterranean stems up to 2.5 mm diameter. Long shoots prostrate, rooting at nodes, c.10 cm long with internodes c.10 mm long; short shoots erect, c.20 mm long, c.1 mm diameter, pale brown, sparsely hairy. Leaves imbricate on short shoots, imparipinnate, 10-50 × 5-10 mm. Stipules 3-4 mm long, with margins and tips hairy, and free portion c.1 mm long, entire, triangular. Leaflets 3-5 pairs, gradually reduced in size to base of rachis, broad obovate or orbicular in outline, 2.5-5.0 × 2.5-4.0 mm, truncate at apex or slightly emarginate; upper surface glaucous, with sparse to moderately dense appressed hairs, and indistinct veins; lower surface glaucous, with appressed hairs on veins; teeth 6-9, dull red with pink hydathode area at tip, weakly penicillate. Hair simple, unicellular, 0.2-0.8 mm long, on stipules, rachis and leaflets. Capitulum terminating short shoot, sessile, subtended by several leafy bracts, 5-8 mm diameter at flowering, 25-35 mm diameter (including spines) at fruiting. Bracteoles on receptacle linear-lanceolate, c.2 mm long, with hairy margins. Florets c. 10, very shortly stipitate. Hypanthium c.1.5 × 1.5 mm, enclosing perigynous ovary, sparsely hairy, with 4 very short spines inserted third-way from apex. Sepals 4, arising from hypanthium rim, free or shortly joined at base, 1.5 mm long, ovate, thickened at tip, hairy below. Petals 0. Stamens 2-3; filaments up to 2.5 mm long; anthers 0.5 × 0.6 mm, white. Styles 2, 2.5 mm long including stigma; stigma white, fimbriate, 1 mm broad, protruding from aperture of hypanthium. Fruit indehiscent; achenes 2, enclosed in the hypanthium; hypanthium turbinate, c.2.5 × 2.0 mm, red-brown, 4-ribbed, sparsely hairy; spines 4, 5-20 mm long, red, softly sparsely hairy, at least when young, with a group of retrorse hairs at tip.

SIMILAR TAXA

Allied to *A. buchananii* Hook. f. which differs from *A. tesca* by its lower altitudinal range, more compact growth habit, densely tufted leafy stems and pale milky green or grey foliage (rather than glaucous). *Acaena buchananii* has 5-6 imbricate cf. 3-5 pairs of basally remote leaflets, while the capitula of *A. buchananii* is compressed with spines held erect, rather than the loose ball and divergent spines typical of *A. tesca*.

FLOWERING

January

FLOWER COLOURS

White

FRUITING

February – March (- February)

PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

Easily grown from fresh seed and from rooted pieces.

THREATS

A Naturally Uncommon, sparsely distributed species which is at times locally abundant. There are no known threats.

ETYMOLOGY

acaena: From the Greek 'akanthos' thorn, referring to the spiny calyx that many species have

ATTRIBUTION

Description adapted from Macmillan (1991).

REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

Macmillan, B.H. 1991: *Acaena rorida* and *Acaena tesca* (Rosaceae) - two new species from New Zealand. *New Zealand Journal of Botany* 29: 131-138.

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* 2009 Vol. 11 No. 4 pp. 285-309

MORE INFORMATION

<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/acaena-tesca/>