Coleonema pulchellum

COMMON NAME
Breath of heaven, confetti bush (see also 'diosma' under Synonyms, below)

SYNONYMS
C. pulchellum has been known as C. pulchrum but this is a different species. It has also been known as Diosma, but Victor & van Wyk (1999) showed these are separate genera and C. pulchellum is not a Diosma. (The continued use of 'diosma' for C. pulchellum in some gardening circles only adds to the confusion).

FAMILY
Rutaceae

AUTHORITY
Coleonema pulchellum I. Williams

FLORA CATEGORY
Vascular – Exotic

STRUCTURAL CLASS
Trees & Shrubs - Dicotyledons

NVS CODE
COLPUL

CONSERVATION STATUS
Not applicable

DISTRIBUTION
Despite being very popular and widely planted, there are few records of C. pulchellum as self-establishing. Seedlings have been found near planted shrubs in very sandy soils in Wellington and Whanganui.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION
A much branched bush, 0.5-1.3 m tall in cultivation; planted for its compact shape and massed pink flowering. (A red-flowered form is reported.) Leaves fine, heath-like, with fine acuminate mucrons and very fine serrations in upper 1/3-1/4 of each leaf; mature leaves plano-convex in cross-section. Foliage aromatic when crushed.

SIMILAR TAXA
Various small-leaved members of Myrtaceae resemble Coleonema but a hand lens will show the very fine leaf margin serrations on C. pulchellum.

FLOWER COLOURS
Red/Pink

YEAR NATURALISED
1993

ORIGIN
South Africa

REASON FOR INTRODUCTION
Garden ornamental

ATTRIBUTION
Fact sheet up-dated and expanded by C C Ogle, Oct 2015

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REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

Janine E. Victor & Abraham E. van Wyk (1999) Pollen morphology of Diosma
and Coleonema (Rutaceae: Diosminae) and its taxonomic implications, Grana, 38:1, 12-19, DOI:
10.1080/001731300750044663

MORE INFORMATION
https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/coleonema-pulchellum/