

Coprosma cheesemanii

SYNONYMS

Coprosma depressa (Hook. f.) Cheeseman

FAMILY

Rubiaceae

AUTHORITY

Coprosma cheesemanii W.R.B.Oliv.

FLORA CATEGORY

Vascular – Native

ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes

ENDEMIC GENUS

No

ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Trees & Shrubs - Dicotyledons

NVS CODE

COPCHE

CHROMOSOME NUMBER

2n = 88

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2017 | Not Threatened

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2012 | Not Threatened

2009 | Not Threatened

2004 | Not Threatened

BRIEF DESCRIPTION

Low growing, very small leaved shrub with branches bearing perpendicular short leafy branches giving a flattened appearance inhabiting upland areas. Twigs fuzzy. Leaves glossy, narrow, 8-11mm long, tip pointed, in clusters of pairs, with a line of small hairs between the leaf bases. Fruit orange or reddish.

DISTRIBUTION

Endemic. North, South and Stewart Islands. Locally from Mount Hikurangi southwards.

HABITAT

Montane to subalpine 400-1500m, tussock-grassland, shrubland, bog forest, often permanently damp areas.

WETLAND PLANT INDICATOR STATUS RATING

FACU: Facultative Upland

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



Tongariro, February. Photographer: John Smith-Dodsworth, Licence: CC BY-NC.



Leith Saddle, Dunedin. Photographer: John Barkla, Licence: CC BY.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Prostrate to sprawling shrub up to 0.5 (-1) m tall. Branches greyish, more or less divaricate, branchlets slender; pubescent. Leaves very shortly petioled. Stipules broadly triangular, obtuse, pubescent to villous, ciliate especially at apex. Lamina coriaceous, glossy, olive-green, linear to narrow-oblong, acute, more or less 8-11 x 1-2 mm, margins usually reddish brown. Midrib alone evident. Flowers solitary, terminal on short branchlets. Male flower without calyx; corolla broadly campanulate; lobes 4-6, acute to subacute, more or less equal to tube. Female Flower with calyx-teeth evident, acute, corolla-tube short, lobes linear more or less reflexed. Drupe orange-red, globose, 6-7 mm diameter.

MANAAKI WHENUA ONLINE INTERACTIVE KEY

Key to *Coprosma* species of New Zealand

SIMILAR TAXA

Coprosma cuneata has indented tips to the leaves and dark bark on the branchlets.

C. microcarpa has small white fruit, abundant leaves that are rather thin and often arranged in flat leafy planes, and dark brown bark.

C. acerosa and its close relatives have longer, narrower leaves, and pale blue or white fruit often flecked with darker blue.

C. fowerakeri is more densely leafy, with closely clustered, more leathery leaves and orange fruit.

FLOWERING

December

FLOWER COLOURS

Green

FRUITING

January-March

LIFE CYCLE

Fleshy drupes are dispersed by frugivory (Thorsen et al., 2009).

ETYMOLOGY

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

cheesemanii: Named after Thomas Frederick Cheeseman (1846 - 15 October 1923) who was a New Zealand botanist and naturalist who, in 1906, produced *The Manual of the New Zealand Flora*.

TAXONOMIC NOTES

Wilson & Galloway (1993) briefly discuss other related spp.: *Coprosma* aff. *cheesemanii* (C. sp. (r) of Eagle 1982) is a prostrate shrub with narrow oblong leaves and orange-red fruit. It is restricted to pans of Nelson and Marlborough where it grows in crevices of marble and on the Mineral Belt ultramafic rocks. *Coprosma* aff. *cheesemanii* (C. sp. (o) of Eagle 1982) is a prostrate or sprawling shrub up to 70 cm tall with distinctly wider leaves than in *C. cheesemanii* proper, with which it grows in the central North Island. It is found in subalpine and alpine shrubland in the central North Island southwards to the southern Ruahine Range. A. P. Druce recognises both of these forms as distinct unnamed species.

ATTRIBUTION

Description adapted by M. Ward from Allan (1961), Mark (2012), Wilson & Galloway (1993).

REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

Allan, H. H. 1961. *Flora of New Zealand*. Vol. 1. Wellington: Government Printer. pg. 568, 586-587.

Eagle, A. 1982. *Eagle's trees and shrubs of New Zealand*. Vol. 2. Auckland, Collins.

Mark, A. F. 2012. *Above the Treeline: A Nature Guide to Alpine New Zealand*. Craig Potton Publishing, Nelson. pg. 169.

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.

Wilson, H. D., & Galloway, T. 1993. *Small-leaved shrubs of New Zealand*. Manuka Press. pg. 89-91.

MORE INFORMATION

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