

Coprosma dumosa

SYNONYMS

Coprosma parviflora var. *dumosa* Cheeseman; *Coprosma tayloriae* A.P.Druce ex G.T.Jane

FAMILY

Rubiaceae

AUTHORITY

Coprosma dumosa (Cheeseman) G.T.Jane

FLORA CATEGORY

Vascular – Native

ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes

ENDEMIC GENUS

No

ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Trees & Shrubs - Dicotyledons

NVS CODE

COPDMO

CHROMOSOME NUMBER

2n = 132

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2017 | Not Threatened

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2012 | Not Threatened

2009 | Not Threatened

2004 | Not Threatened

BRIEF DESCRIPTION

A bushy, small-leaved shrub with 'layered' branches; mostly common in higher rainfall montane forests and shrublands from the Kaimai Range southwards to Stewart Island." Also in the drier South Island. Leaves small, elliptic, 4-6mm long, in clusters of pairs, thick, with 1-2 pits on underside, main vein on underside reaching the leaf tip, with tiny hairs on margin in wet areas. Fruit orange or red (mostly white/translucent in North Island).

DISTRIBUTION

Endemic. North Island from Kaimai Range south; South Island (rare in Fiordland), Stewart Island.

HABITAT

Lowland to montane shrubland, scrub and forest. More likely to descend in altitude towards its southern extent.

WETLAND PLANT INDICATOR STATUS RATING

FAC: Facultative

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



Huiarau range. April. Photographer: John Smith-Dodsworth, Licence: CC BY-NC.



Huiarau range. April. Photographer: John Smith-Dodsworth, Licence: CC BY-NC.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Erect shrub up to 3 m tall, leafy appearance. **Branches** slender, quite robust, **bark** smooth and grey to grey-brown. **Branchlets** pubescent when young. **Leaves** opposite, numerous, pale grey-green to yellow-green, fascicled on short branchlets; **petiole** glabrous to pubescent, occasionally mid rib may have row of hairs present, rather thick in texture. **Lamina** elliptical to obovate, 5-13 × 2-6 mm, on seedlings may have hair fringed margin, generally margin glabrous, if hairs are present, they are on apical third of margin only, margin often dark coloured, upper surface may have midvein visible, may be pale coloured in centre at petiole end, underside glabrous, generally midvein visible. **Stipule** shallow triangle appearance, short sheath. Central tooth-like form with pairs of teeth either side which are well hidden by dense hairs, front pubescent. **Flowers** solitary or clustered, borne directly from branchlet stem. Male flowers 3-4 mm long (not including stamen), stamens 4, violet and yellow. Female flowers, sepals tiny, pale yellow, approximately 2 mm long (not including styles), styles 2. **Drupe** transparent white, or pale gold, or pale pink, or bright red, on short stalk 1-1.5 mm, spherical fruit 4-5 mm diameter. **Seeds** 2 per drupe.

MANAAKI WHENUA ONLINE INTERACTIVE KEY

Key to Coprosma species of New Zealand

SIMILAR TAXA

Coprosma parviflora which differs by the undersides of leaves being distinctly hairy (glabrous to glabrescent in *C. dumosa*), violet black fruits (white, pink or yellow in *C. dumosa*), and different chromosome number ($2n = 132$ in *C. parviflora*, $2n = 88$ in *C. dumosa*). Furthermore, *C. parviflora* is confined to the northern North Island.

Coprosma ciliata can be distinguished by having both long and short hairs (generally more hairs) on the branchlets (*C. dumosa* has only short hairs). The leaves of *C. ciliata* are generally thinner and hairier than those of *C. dumosa*. *C. ciliata* has larger fruit 6-7 mm compared to 4-5 mm. The colour of the fruit is throughout, whereas in *C. dumosa* the colour is only in the skin of the drupe.

Coprosma pedicellata a potentially taller plant (up to 7 metres), is very hard to tell apart unless fruit is present, drupe of *C. pedicellata* has marginally longer stem at 1.7-2.3 mm compared to *C. dumosa* at 1-1.5 mm. The fruit of *C. pedicellata* is rarely translucent white (most common colour for *C. dumosa*), more often dark purple or black.

FLOWERING

October - November (-January)

FLOWER COLOURS

Yellow, Green, Violet/Purple

FRUITING

February-April (-October)

LIFE CYCLE

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

PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

Easy from fresh seed, and semi-hardwood cuttings. In warmer climates does best in a shaded site or planted within a deep, moist soil.

ETYMOLOGY

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

dumosa: Bushy or shrubby

TAXONOMIC NOTES

This species has been somewhat confused in its description historically with suggestions of it being a separate entity to *C. tayloriae*. Glenny and Cruikshank (2011) clearly analyse the two suggested species and conclude that some historical misidentifications of samples were used that were that of *C. pedicellata*, therefore suggesting that *C. tayloriae* is synonymous with *C. dumosa*.

ATTRIBUTION

Fact sheet prepared for NZPCN by M.D. Ward (14 May 2024). Description adapted from Allan (1961), Wilson & Galloway (1993).

REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

Allan, H. H. 1961. Flora of New Zealand. Vol. 1. Wellington: Government Printer. pp. 571-572

Glenny, D. & Cruickshank, J. 2011. Taxonomic notes on the New Zealand flora: *Coprosma dumosa* and *C. tayloriae*, are there two species?. New Zealand journal of botany, 49(4), pp.481-488

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, Christchurch, NZ. page 93

NZPCN FACT SHEET CITATION

Please cite as: Ward, M.D. (Year at time of access): *Coprosma dumosa* Fact Sheet (content continuously updated). New Zealand Plant Conservation Network. <https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/coprosma-dumosa/> (Date website was queried)

MORE INFORMATION

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