

Coprosma elatirioides

SYNONYMS

None (first described in 2003)

FAMILY

Rubiaceae

AUTHORITY

Coprosma elatirioides de Lange et A. Markey

FLORA CATEGORY

Vascular – Native

ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes

ENDEMIC GENUS

No

ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Trees & Shrubs - Dicotyledons

NVS CODE

COPELA

CHROMOSOME NUMBER

2n = 44

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2017 | Not Threatened

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2012 | Not Threatened

2009 | Not Threatened

2004 | Not Threatened

BRIEF DESCRIPTION

A low wide-angled bushy shrub with small narrow leaves inhabiting open damp areas in the South Island. Twigs long slender and flexible, covered in short fuzz. Leaves curved sideways, very narrow, around 10mm long, with tiny clustered hairs on underside (lens needed), margin red. Fruit white with blue flecks.

DISTRIBUTION

Endemic. South and Stewart Islands.

HABITAT

Lowland to subalpine, favouring open swamps, mires, pakihi, and associated poorly drained soils, often in wetland systems dominated by red tussock (*Chionochloa rubra*) and/or wire rush (*Empodisma minus*).

WETLAND PLANT INDICATOR STATUS RATING

FACW: Facultative Wetland

Usually is a hydrophyte but occasionally found in uplands (non-wetlands).



Grebe valley, Fiordland. January. Photographer: John Smith-Dodsworth, Licence: CC BY-NC.



Grebe valley, Fiordland. January. Photographer: John Smith-Dodsworth, Licence: CC BY-NC.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Semi-erect to prostrate, shortly rhizomatous, evergreen, dioecious, trailing shrub up to 0.5-1 x 2-6(-8) m. Main stems 2 or more, up to 40 mm diam., arising from a dense network of lateral roots, buried stems and short-rhizomes; branches numerous, wiry, slender, lianoid, long-trailing, arising at angles of > 45 deg, frequently rooting at nodes. Mature outer bark rust-brown or maroon-brown; inner bark lime-green to green yellow. Brachyblasts numerous, very leafy; internodes 0.1-0.2 mm, scarcely visible, obscured by leaves and stipules. Leaves opposite, linear-filiform, falcate, coriaceous; petioles scarcely differentiated from lamina; lamina often falcate, 0.2-0.5 mm long, crimson or dark green, (4-)10(-30) x (0.3-)0.6(-1.2) mm, margins involute, apex obtuse, base attenuate. Leaf colour usually wine-red, sometimes light green or dark green with red margins, adaxial surface bearing patent, deciduous eglandular hairs (40x magnification); leaf domatia common, 1-3 per leaf when present; midrib scarcely evident. Stipules 0.3-0.6 mm long, orange-brown or purple, shortly sheathing, sheath < 1/4 length of stipule and apical denticle, narrowly triangular, marginal fringe chartaceous, dark abaxial surface heavily invested in white hairs, 0.1-0.5 mm long; margin of stipules entire; denticles (3-)5(-6), glandular, black, deciduous; with 1-2 at apex of stipule, and (1-)3(-4) on stipule sheath. Plants unisexual; flowers subsessile, axillary, solitary or paired in uppermost leaves of previous growth flush. Pedicel minute. Male flowers mostly paired; calyx vestigial; corolla 5-6 mm long; tube 1.5-2 mm long, funnelform, pale yellow copiously flecked with red or pink; lobes 3-4, broadly elliptic or lanceolate, 4.5-5 x 1.6-1.8 mm, recurved; filaments 4-6 mm long, cream; anthers 3-4, 2.5-3 x 1-1.5 mm, oblong, apex acute or attenuated; pollen creamy yellow. Female flowers mostly solitary; calyx adnate to ovary, pale yellow flecked crimson or pink; lobes 4, 0.75- 1 mm long, obovate to oblanceolate, basal portion pale yellow flecked with red fading to pale yellow in upper portion; corolla tube 2-2.5 mm long, narrowly campanulate, yellow, striped and/or flecked red; lobes 3-4, linear-lanceolate to lanceolate 2.5-3 x 0.6 mm, strongly decurved; ovary ovoid, green, 0.8-1 x 0.6-0.8 mm; stigmas 2, 8- 14 mm long, terete, pale yellow to cream, densely papillose-pubescent. Drupe ellipsoid, 4-6 x 3-4 mm, white stippled with dark blue flecks (rarely entirely dark navy blue); calyx persistent. Pyrenes (1-)2, unequal; the larger (2.5-)3.0(-4.5) x 1.8-2.5 mm, ovoid to ellipsoid, plano-convex, apex obtuse, rarely acute; base obtuse to acute; operculum distinct, obovate-obtriangular.

MANAAKI WHENUA ONLINE INTERACTIVE KEY

Key to *Coprosma* species of New Zealand

SIMILAR TAXA

Differs from the vegetatively similar *C. intertexta* by its long-trailing, subscandent, almost lianoid habit; longer branchlets; shortly sheathing conspicuously denticulate stipules; fleshy coriaceous, adaxially pubescent leaves with obtuse apices; and its restriction to wetlands. From other *Coprosmas* it differs by its long trailing, non-flexuous, wiry branchlets, stipule characters, and its habitat preference.

FLOWERING

October - November

FLOWER COLOURS

Red/Pink, Yellow

FRUITING

March - July

LIFE CYCLE

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

PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

Easily grown from fresh fruit and cuttings. An excellent wetland plant.

ETYMOLOGY

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

ATTRIBUTION

Description based on Markey and de Lange (2003)

REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

Markey, A.S.; de Lange, P.J. 2003: A new species of *Coprosma* Sect. *Acerosae* (Rubiaceae) endemic to the South and Stewart Islands of New Zealand. *New Zealand Journal of Botany* 41: 459-473.

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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<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/coprosma-elatirioides/> (Date website was queried)

MORE INFORMATION

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