

# Coprosma spathulata subsp. spathulata

## SYNONYMS

None (first described in 1839)

## FAMILY

Rubiaceae

## AUTHORITY

*Coprosma spathulata* A.Cunn. subsp. *spathulata*

## FLORA CATEGORY

Vascular – Native

## ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes

## ENDEMIC GENUS

No

## ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

## STRUCTURAL CLASS

Trees & Shrubs - Dicotyledons

## NVS CODE

COPSSS

## CHROMOSOME NUMBER

2n = 44

## CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2017 | Not Threatened

## PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2012 | Not Threatened

2009 | Not Threatened

2004 | Not Threatened

## BRIEF DESCRIPTION

Bushy shrub with wide-angled twigs bearing pairs of rounded leaves with a long dark flattened leaf stalk inhabiting the northern North Island. Twigs fuzzy. Leaf tip often dented and with very small hairs (lens needed). Small dark tooth on stem between leaf bases. Fruit dark red or black.

## DISTRIBUTION

Endemic. Confined to the North Island where it occurs from Te Pahi south to Waitomo in the west and near Gisborne in the east

## HABITAT

Coastal to montane forest. Mostly in coastal to lowland forest. In the northern part of its range often associated with kauri and kauri-mixed hardwood forest. However it also grows in secondary regrowth under manuka (*Kunzea ericoides* s.l.) and kahikatoa (*Leptospermum scoparium* s.l.) and in scrub. It is also often found in alluvial and riparian forests.



Coromandel, March. Photographer: John Smith-Dodsworth, Licence: CC BY-NC.



Staminate flowers. In cultivation. Photographer: Jeremy R. Rolfe, Date taken: 19/07/2007, Licence: CC BY.

## WETLAND PLANT INDICATOR STATUS RATING

UPL: Obligate Upland

Rarely is a hydrophyte, almost always in uplands (non-wetlands).

## DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Erect, shortly branched to almost fastigiate shrub up to 2 m tall, branches and branchlets slender, widely spreading, divergent, finely and harshly pubescent (rugose). Petioles 7-15 mm long, broadly and prominently winged. Stipules narrow-triangular, obtuse, somewhat ciliolate, denticle prominent. Lamina thick to almost fleshy, coriaceous, glabrous, ± glossy, 10-20 × 10-20 mm, dark green above, usually mottled with yellow or pale green and often streaked or blotched purple, paler below, spathulate, orbicular to broad-oblong, truncate to emarginate or retuse, sometimes apiculate, abruptly narrowed to petiole. Midrib and principal veins evident, reticulations usually obscure. Flowers solitary or paired, terminal on arrested branchlets. Male flower with long linear calyx-teeth; corolla tubular, lobes ovate, acute, > tube. Female flower with 4-5 acuminate calyx-teeth; corolla tubular, lobes narrow, acuminate, > tube. Drupe 6-8 mm long, black, sometimes dark orange or red, globose to subglobose (very rarely oblong).

## MANAAKI WHENUA ONLINE INTERACTIVE KEY

Key to Coprosma species of New Zealand

## SIMILAR TAXA

Coprosma spathulata subsp. spathulata is very close to C. spathulata subsp. hikuruana. However that subspecies is confined to the ultramafic rocks of the Surville Cliffs and North Cape Plateau, where subsp. spathulata does not occur. It differs from subsp. spathulata by its prostrate, widely trailing growth habit, and dull violet-black, ellipsoid drupes. The juvenile of Coprosma arborea is often confused with C. spathulata subsp. spathulata. From that species both subspecies of Coprosma spathulata can be easily distinguished by their harshly pubescent (rugose) rather than smooth branchlets.

## FLOWERING

June - October

## FLOWER COLOURS

Green, White

## FRUITING

July - June

## LIFE CYCLE

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

## PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

Easily grown from fresh seed and semi-hardwood cuttings. In cultivation it is often very slow, doing best planted in sheltered sites on free draining, moist soils under a taller shrub or tree canopy.

## ETYMOLOGY

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

**spathulata:** Shaped like a flattened spoon (leaves)

## ATTRIBUTION

Description adapted from Allan (1961)

## REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

Allan, H.H. 1961: Flora of New Zealand. Vol. I, Government Printer, Wellington.

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

## MORE INFORMATION

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