

Coprosma talbrockiei

SYNONYMS

None (described in 1974)

FAMILY

Rubiaceae

AUTHORITY

Coprosma talbrockiei L.B.Moore et R.Mason

FLORA CATEGORY

Vascular – Native

ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes

ENDEMIC GENUS

No

ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Trees & Shrubs - Dicotyledons

NVS CODE

COPTAL

CHROMOSOME NUMBER

2n = 44

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2017 | Threatened – Nationally Critical | Qualifiers: DP, RR, Sp

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2012 | Threatened – Nationally Critical | Qualifiers: RR, Sp

2009 | Threatened – Nationally Endangered | Qualifiers: RF, RR, Sp

2004 | Range Restricted

BRIEF DESCRIPTION

Very rare ground hugging herb with numerous small very sharp-tipped light green leaves in whorls of three around the soft stem inhabiting Northwestern Nelson. Flowers small, with both male and female parts. Fruit white, covered in rough thin flakes.

DISTRIBUTION

Endemic. New Zealand; South Island (north-west Nelson, mainly in the Goulard Downs and Aorere area, but also on north side of the Buller Catchment)

HABITAT

Lowland to subalpine. Usually in sparsely vegetated, open sites overlying granite where it grows on peat, amongst cobbles or within poorly draining impoverished soils, in association with moss cushions, lichen or within *Donatia* J.R.Forst. et G.Forst. cushions



Goulard Downs, Kahurangi National Park.
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Goulard Downs, Kahurangi National Park.
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DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Plant glabrous; stems of leafy twigs to 2 mm diameter, only slightly woody, prostrate, branching freely, rooting at some nodes; internodes mostly shorter than leaf length. Leaves 3 at a node; stipular cup deep, bearing only a single minute denticle in each interpetiolar space, sheath lacking; leaf abscission zone obscure and dead leaves commonly remaining attached to rim of cup; lamina c.5-7 × 1 mm, entire, narrow-elliptic, tapering to long-acuminate tip; midrib only visible vein but reticulation obvious in dead leaves; on proximal nodes lamina often smaller, submembranous, and bract-like. Flower bisexual, solitary, terminal, usually subtended by three unmodified leaves which are very occasionally succeeded by a minute floral bract. Calyx shortly tubular, 0.5-1.5 mm long; lobes 4-6, triangular, apiculate, sometimes almost into a hair. Corolla tube 3-5 mm long, widening above to diameter of 2.5 mm, cream-coloured; lobes 4-7 (not always uniform in a single flower) slightly incurved, inner surface or border papillose. Stamens 4-7, attached to receptacle; filaments white, elongating as flower ages and finally much exceeding corolla, sometimes of different lengths. Anthers 0.8-1.0 mm long, dorsifixed, sometimes slightly tailed; connective dark, apiculate. Style if present, very short; stigmas 2-5, white, to 9 mm long, filiform, very shortly hairy. Ovary c.1.5 mm long, often, though probably not invariably, 3-locular. Fruit c. 5 mm in diameter, globose, crowned by hardened calyx lobes, whitish, the surface rough with scurfy scales formed by rather regular fragmentation of epidermis; mesocarp opaque; pyrenes usually 3, c.2.5 × 1.7 mm.

MANAAKI WHENUA ONLINE INTERACTIVE KEY

Key to *Coprosma* species of New Zealand

SIMILAR TAXA

Of the New Zealand species *Coprosma talbrockiei* is most similar to *C. atropurpurea* (Cockayne et Allan) L.B. Moore. Both species possess stipules with one median tooth only, and that are not ciliate or sheathing; they also lack a definite leaf abscission zone; while the leaves are usually acute to acuminate, and often hair-tipped. *Coprosma atropurpurea* differs from *C. talbrockiei* by the leaves which have at least some stiff retrorse hairs (rather than glabrous), thicker, woody rhizomes (rather than very slender, scarcely woody, thread like rhizomes and stems), invariably unisexual rather than bisexual flowers, and translucent, dark red to almost purple-black rather than opaque, white, scurfy fruits.

FLOWERING

December - April

FLOWER COLOURS

Cream

FRUITING

April - May

LIFE CYCLE

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

PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

Difficult. Should not be removed from the wild.

THREATS

Known from only eight populations. Although the majority of the populations occur within Kahurangi National Park, none of the populations are large, all seem to be experiencing recruitment failure (fruit is produced but seedlings are scarce). Gorse (*Ulex europaeus*) may pose a threat at some sites.

ETYMOLOGY

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

WHERE TO BUY

Not commercially available

NOTES ON TAXONOMY

Probably not a *Coprosma*. nrDNA ITS and ETS sequences place this species in the Australian endemic genus *Duringtonia* R.J.F.Hend. et Guymer.

ATTRIBUTION

Description adapted from Moore and Mason (1974)

REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

Moore, L.B.; Mason, R. 1974: *Coprosma talbrockiei* sp. nov. and Allied Creeping Species (Rubiaceae). *New Zealand Journal of Botany* 12: 137-48.

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-talbrockiei/>