

Hibiscus trionum

COMMON NAME

bladder hibiscus

FAMILY

Malvaceae

AUTHORITY

Hibiscus trionum L.

FLORA CATEGORY

Vascular – Exotic

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Trees & Shrubs - Dicotyledons

CONSERVATION STATUS

Not applicable

HABITAT

Most collections come from urban or formerly urban situations. The earliest collections come from Reef Point and were gathered between 1897, when that area was a thriving gum digging settlement. Some modern gatherings come from indigenous habitats, but these are usually near old camp sites or picnic spots.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Annual to short-lived perennial herb up to 0.8 m tall. Stems densely clothed in stellate hairs when young becoming glabrescent with age. Lower leaves glabrescent, suborbicular, entire to coarsely serrated, stem leaves green at first becoming purple-red with age, palmately 3-5-lobed, 20-80 mm long, somewhat hairy, segments deeply and coarsely lobed or serrated. Flowers solitary and axillary, often with 1-3 flowers pseudoterminal; epicalyx segments (8-)10-13, free to near base, linear-lanceolate, calyx campanulate; calyx teeth ovate-triangular, somewhat < tube in length. Petals 20-30 mm long, pale yellow to yellow, basally marked dark brown, purple-red or maroon. Capsule long persistent, with papery calyx. Seeds 2-2.5 mm, papillate

SIMILAR TAXA

Hibiscus richardsonii, has been confused with this species. It differs by the smaller, finely serrated leaves, smaller uniformly cream flowers whose petals lack the basal maroon blotch, and by its smaller seeds (de Lange et al. 2010; Craven et al. 2011). It is has a different nrDNA ITS sequence.

FLOWERING

October - May

FLOWER COLOURS

Brown, Yellow

FRUITING

May be present all year

LIFE CYCLE

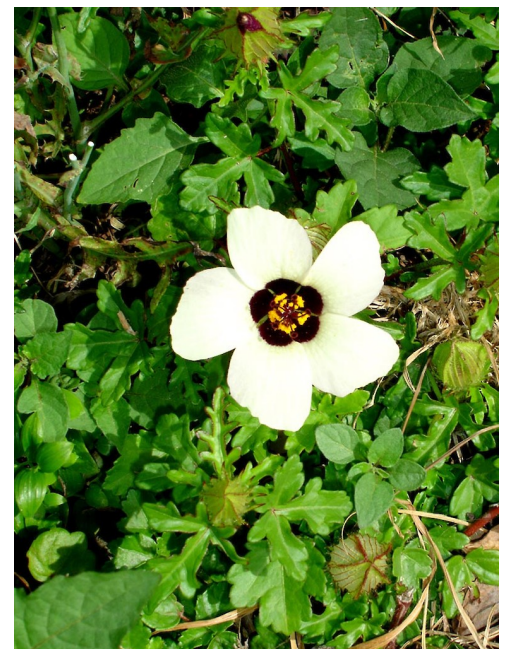
A short-lived perennial which reproduces by seed. Seed germinates readily, and remains viable for many years. Usually spreads from garden situations. Though some occurrences stem from deliberate, misguided naturalisations.

YEAR NATURALISED

c.1860 - possibly 1890.



Hibiscus trionum. Photographer: Peter J. de Lange, Licence: CC BY-NC.



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ORIGIN

Unknown. The type is from a garden plant collected from Florence, Italy

REASON FOR INTRODUCTION

Ornamental

TOLERANCES

Frost-sensitive and in cold climates behaves as an annual.

ETYMOLOGY

hibiscus: Name of very ancient origin used by the Roman poet Virgil for the marsh mallow plant.

TAXONOMIC NOTES

The New Zealand race of *Hibiscus trionum* is diploid (all others chromosome counts for this species reported in world literature are tetraploid - see Murray et al. 2008). Further the New Zealand race of *H. trionum* has, so far, yet to be matched with any of the other races of "*H. trionum*" seen in Australia, USA, Africa and Western Europe. There is thus a slight possibility that the plant described here is actually indigenous - currently it is known in botanical literature as *Hibiscus trionum* "N.Z. diploid naturalised race" (Craven et al. 2011) - further research is needed.

ATTRIBUTION

Description based on Craven et al. (2011). Fact sheet prepared by P.J. de Lange (September 2010)

REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

- Craven, L.A.; de Lange, P.J.; Lally, T.R.; Murray, B.G.; Johnson, S.B. 2011. The indigenous Australasian bladder ketmia species (*Hibiscus trionum* complex, Malvaceae). *New Zealand Journal of Botany* 49: 27–40.
- de Lange, P.J.; Heenan, P.B.; Norton, D.A.; Rolfe, J.R.; Sawyer, J.W.D. 2010: Threatened Plants of New Zealand. Christchurch, Canterbury University Press. 471pp.
- Johnson, A. T. and Smith, H. A (1986). Plant Names Simplified: Their pronunciation, derivation and meaning. Landsman Bookshop Ltd: Buckenhill, UK.
- Murray, B.G.; Craven, L.A.; de Lange, P.J. 2008: New observations on chromosome number variation in *Hibiscus trionum* s.l. (Malvaceae) and their implications for systematics and conservation. *New Zealand Journal of Botany* 46: 315-319.

NZPCN FACT SHEET CITATION

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MORE INFORMATION

<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/hibiscus-trionum/>