

Peperomia leptostachya

SYNONYMS

Has been referred to as *Peperomia blanda* var. *floribunda* (Miq.) H.Huber

FAMILY

Piperaceae

AUTHORITY

Peperomia leptostachya Hook. et Arn.

FLORA CATEGORY

Vascular – Native

ENDEMIC TAXON

No

ENDEMIC GENUS

No

ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Herbs - Dicotyledons other than Composites

CHROMOSOME NUMBER

2n = 66

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2017 | Non-resident Native – Coloniser | Qualifiers: OL, SO

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2012 | Non-resident Native – Coloniser | Qualifiers: OL, SO

2009 | Non-resident Native – Coloniser | Qualifiers: SO, OL

2004 | Non-resident Native – Vagrant

DISTRIBUTION

In New Zealand known from Raoul Island (Kermadec Island group) only.
Common on islands throughout the Pacific

HABITAT

In New Zealand found as a low epiphyte on Kermadec Pohutukawa (*Metrosideros kermadecensis* W.R.B.Oliv.), on cliff faces and amongst rocks and rubble beneath cliff faces and ravines on Raoul Island.



Peperomia blanda plant in the wild, Raoul Island, 2004. Photographer: Bec Stanley, Licence: CC BY-SA.



Peperomia blanda. Photographer: Peter J. de Lange, Licence: CC BY-NC.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Succulent perennial herb forming sparingly to densely branched shrublets up to 500 x 600 mm. Stems light yellow green to reddish-green, ascending or erect from creeping base, 150-250-500 mm long, up to 10 mm diameter at base, branches less toward apex, internodes 10-40 mm apart; surfaces finely puberulent (hairs 0.3-0.8 mm long). Leaves opposite or sometimes ternate, usually falling readily. Petioles 5-10 mm long, puberulent. Leaf lamina 15-60 x 12-30 mm, dark green to yellow-green, lower surface paler, elliptic-obovate to elliptic, or elliptic-ovate, apex broadly acute, obtuse or rounded, base cuneate to broadly cuneate; palmately 3-5-nerved, finely puberulent, moderately firm-fleshy, thin and membranous. Inflorescences axillary or terminal spikes, these numerous, 20-130 mm long, rachis 0.5-1 mm diameter, glabrous. Flowers moderately close to loosely spaced, peduncles 5-25 mm long, puberulent with finely spreading to appressed hairs; ovary broadly ovoid, apex oblique; stigmas subterminal. Fruit broadly obovoid 0.9-1 mm.

SIMILAR TAXA

It is not closely allied to any of the other species found in New Zealand. On Raoul Island it grows with *P. urvilleana* from which it is easily distinguished by its larger uniformly hairy leaves

FLOWERING

October - July

FRUITING

October - July

PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

Easy from rooted pieces, stem cuttings and (if available) fresh seed. Cold sensitive but an excellent pot plant for a warm, shaded site in the house

THREATS

Still uncommon on Raoul Island, though recent (2004, 2009) field survey suggests it is actively increasing its range on that island (de Lange 2020).

ETYMOLOGY

peperomia: From the Greek peper (pepper) and homoios (resembling), referring to its resemblance to a true pepper (to which it is closely related)

leptostachya: Slender spiked

COMMENTS

Formerly listed as a vagrant. It is now clear that it is actively spreading and as it is apparently no longer constrained to a particular habitat on Raoul Island it is better regarded as a Coloniser. New Zealand plants were initially referred to *P. leptostachya*, then Sykes & West (1996) following Forster (1993) placed Raoul plants in *P. blanda* var. *floribunda* by Forster (1993) (see also comments by Murray & de Lange (2013). Recently Mathieu (2020) showed that *Peperomia blanda* var. *floribunda* was a superfluous name and that the widespread Pacific Basin plant that had been referred to it and to *P. blanda* was actually *P. leptostachya*. *Peperomia blanda* is a northern South American species (see also comments by de Lange 2020).

ATTRIBUTION

Fact Sheet prepared by P.J. de Lange (30 August 2011). Description based on fresh specimens and live plants from Raoul Island.

REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

- de Lange, P.J. 2020: *Peperomia leptostachya* (Piperaceae) on Raoul Island, Kermadec Islands—a name reinstated. *Trilepidea* 197: 3-8
- Forster, P.I. 1993: A taxonomic revision of the genus *Peperomia* Ruiz & Pav. (Piperaceae) in mainland Australia. *Austrobaileya* 4: 93-104.
- Mathieu, G. 2020: *Peperomia leptostachya* (Piperaceae) revived. *Candollea* 75: 45-49.
- Murray, B.G.; de Lange, P.J. 2013: Contributions to a chromosome atlas of the New Zealand flora – 40. Miscellaneous counts for 36 families. *New Zealand Journal of Botany* 51: 31-60.
- Sykes, W.R.; West, C.J. 1996: New records and other information on the vascular flora of the Kermadec Islands. *New Zealand Journal of Botany* 34: 447-462.

NZPCN FACT SHEET CITATION

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

MORE INFORMATION

<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/peperomia-leptostachya/>