

Rubus parvus

COMMON NAME

creeping lawyer

FAMILY

Rosaceae

AUTHORITY

Rubus parvus Buchanan

FLORA CATEGORY

Vascular – Native

ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes

ENDEMIC GENUS

No

ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Trees & Shrubs - Dicotyledons

NVS CODE

RUBPAR

CHROMOSOME NUMBER

2n = 28

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2017 | Not Threatened

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2012 | Not Threatened

2009 | Not Threatened

2004 | Not Threatened

BRIEF DESCRIPTION

Scrambling, much-branched, creeping shrub. Young stems, leaf petioles and the veins of the leaf undersides armed with prickles. Leaves mostly solitary, narrow, margins deeply toothed, dark bronze-green to red-green above. Flowers white, usually solitary, occasional in few-flowered sprays. Fruit a large, red berry.

DISTRIBUTION

Endemic. South Island only.

HABITAT

Montane to alpine - often riparian, usually in damp, freely draining, open sites growing with other low shrubs and herbs.



In cultivation. Photographer: Jeremy R. Rolfe, Date taken: 23/11/2004, Licence: CC BY.



Bronze colour on new leaves, Paparoa National Park, West Coast. Photographer: Jesse Bythell, Date taken: 17/09/2016, Licence: CC BY-NC.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Scrambling, much-branched, shrub, stems prostrate, up to 1 m long, rooting at nodes, terete, glabrous, unarmed when mature otherwise young stems reddish, densely to sparsely armed with small, pale red, orange-red to yellow prickles. Stipules minute, caducous, narrow linear-acute. Leaves on petioles 10-20 mm long, lamina 25-90 × 5-20 mm, unifoliolate, coriaceous, adaxially dark bronze-green to red-green, abaxially paler, linear to linear-oblong or narrow-lanceolate, acute, shallowly cordate at base (rarely with small lobes present), sharply serrate-dentate on margins; midrib sparingly prickly. Flowers in leaf-axils, solitary or borne in few-flowered panicles, peduncle up to 10 mm long, sepals 5-8 mm long, ovate, acuminate, pubescent. Petals 5, up to 10 mm long, white, ovate to broad-ovate, obtuse. Male flowers with numerous stamens, ovary rudimentary or absent. Female flowers bearing numerous carpels. Fruits 10-25 mm long, drupelets numerous, red. Endocarp 'seed' 2.0-3.1 mm long, surfaces conspicuously reticulate.

SIMILAR TAXA

Distinguished from introduced (blackberries, raspberries wineberries etc) and indigenous *Rubus* by the scrambling / creeping growth habit, smaller, usually solitary flowers, and single rather than compound, lanceolate, deeply serrated glabrescent leaves.

FLOWERING

November - January

FLOWER COLOURS

White

FRUITING

January - April

PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

Very easily grown from rooted pieces. An attractive scrambling plant for rockeries and an excellent ground cover in well-lighted situations. Prefers a damp, well-drained soil. The large fruits are perhaps the most palatable of the New Zealand indigenous *Rubus*. In cultivation the most commonly grown *R. parvus* is actually the sterile hybrid *R. xbarkeri* (possibly *R. cissoides* × *R. parvus*) which has lighter green (bronze-green) mostly ternate leaves.

ETYMOLOGY

rubus: From the Latin meaning bramble

parvus: Small

TAXONOMIC NOTES

The sterile hybrid *R. xbarkeri* is often sold as this species, it can be distinguished by its trifoliolate leaves and lack of flowers. Its exact parentage remains unclear.

ATTRIBUTION

Fact Sheet prepared for NZPCN by P.J. de Lange 18 October 2016. Description based on Allan (1961), Webb et al. (1988) and Webb & Simpson (2001)

REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

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

Webb CJ, Sykes WR, Garnock-Jones PJ 1988: Flora of New Zealand. Vol. IV. Botany Division, DSIR, Christchurch.

Webb, C.J.; Simpson, M.J.A. 2001: Seeds of New Zealand Gymnosperms and Dicotyledons. Christchurch, Manuka Press.

NZPCN FACT SHEET CITATION

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MORE INFORMATION

<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/rubus-parvus/>