

# Coprosma foetidissima

## COMMON NAME

hūpiro, stinkwood, shit shrub

## FAMILY

Rubiaceae

## AUTHORITY

Coprosma foetidissima J.R.Forst. et G.Forst.

## FLORA CATEGORY

Vascular – Native

## ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes

## ENDEMIC GENUS

No

## ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

## STRUCTURAL CLASS

Trees & Shrubs - Dicotyledons

## NVS CODE

COPFOE

## CHROMOSOME NUMBER

2n = 132

## CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2017 | Not Threatened

## PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2012 | Not Threatened

2009 | Not Threatened

2004 | Not Threatened

## BRIEF DESCRIPTION

Shrub with pairs of thin pale green leaves that smell strongly of dung when crushed. Leaves 1-2cm long, veins not easily seen on the underside, widest at middle and gradually tapering to tip and base, small dark teeth between the bases of the leaf pairs. Fruits yellow or orange.

## DISTRIBUTION

Endemic. North, South, Stewart and Auckland Islands. Occurs from Moehau in North Island southwards.

## HABITAT

Occurs in coastal to subalpine forest, shrubland and occasionally grasslands.

## WETLAND PLANT INDICATOR STATUS RATING

FACU: Facultative Upland

Occasionally is a hydrophyte but usually occurs in uplands (non-wetlands).



Te Moehau, May. Photographer: John Smith-Dodsworth, Licence: CC BY-NC.



At Te Moehau, May. Photographer: John Smith-Dodsworth, Licence: CC BY-NC.

## DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Shrub or tree up to 3 m tall (can reach 6m occasionally). Open-branched with branches rather brittle. The bark is dark brown; branchlets are glabrous. Leaves are foetid (smelly) when bruised or crushed, and occur on slender narrowly winged petioles 8 - 15 mm. long. Stipules are truncate (see image), but produced into a usually conspicuous long denticle; ciliolate, with tufts of unequal hairs at tips. Lamina membranaceous to subcoriaceous, obovate to oblong to broadly ovate, obtuse, apiculate to mucronulate, 30-50 × 14-20 mm. Reticulations of veins evident, at least below. Flowers are solitary and terminal on branchlets. The drupe is pale to full orange, oblong and 7-10 mm and tastes horrible. long. For more information see full Flora description below.

## MANAAKI WHENUA ONLINE INTERACTIVE KEY

Key to *Coprosma* species of New Zealand

## SIMILAR TAXA

Stunted forms of *C. foetidissima* may be confused with *C. colensoi* but the former can be distinguished by the smell of rotten eggs which is given off when the leaves are crushed. Also the fruit is not flecked with darker red.

## FLOWERING

October - November

## FRUITING

March - July

## LIFE CYCLE

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

## ETYMOLOGY

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

**foetidissima**: Vile smelling

## TAXANOMIC NOTES

This is the type species of the genus *Coprosma* J.R.Forst. et G.Forst.

## ATTRIBUTION

Fact sheet prepared by P.J. de Lange for NZPCN (1 June 2013)

## REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

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

## NZPCN FACT SHEET CITATION

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

## MORE INFORMATION

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