



## *Urtica australis*

### **Common Name(s):**

Southern nettle, onga (Chatham I. only)

### **Current Threat Status (2012):**

Not Threatened

### **Distribution:**

Endemic to the South western Fiordland Coast, Stewart, Chatham and other main subantarctic islands.

### **Habitat:**

Abundant in coastal scrub and forest, favouring open ground, such as forest margins, open ground amongst scrub and grasses, and also cobble beaches and sand dunes. Common in damaged forest on the main Chatham Island.

### **Features:**

Stout semi-deciduous shrub forming dense bushes up to 1 x 1 m. Branches semi-erect to erect, rooting at base up to 1 x 0.1 m, somewhat woody at base, semi-succulent. Young branchlets, petioles and inflorescence axes sparsely to densely clad in stinging hairs, these sometimes completely absent from stems. Interpetiolar stipules lanceolate, usually bifid, 20 mm long. Petioles up to 50 mm long, stout, somewhat fleshy, often with a pair of lateral leaflets developed near petiole base. Leaves dark green, 100-150 x 80-140 mm, broadly ovate-cordate to suborbicular, acute to obtuse, coarsely dentate-serrate to subentire (rarely entire), teeth up to 10 mm long, stinging hairs confined to leaf margins and veins on leaf underside, often sparse or absent. Male inflorescence of 1-3 branched spikes up to 70 mm long; female inflorescence similar, flowers densely arranged, perianth in both sexes glabrate. Achenes (Seeds), pale brown, elliptic 1.5-2 mm.

### **Flowering:**

December - January

### **Fruiting:**

December - March

### **Threats:**

Not Threatened Uncommon on Stewart Island. A cursed weed on the Chatham Islands. Relishes disturbance and is virtually untouched by large browsing animals.

### **For more information, visit:**

[http://nzpcn.org.nz/flora\\_details.asp?ID=1355](http://nzpcn.org.nz/flora_details.asp?ID=1355)



**Caption:** Enderby Island  
**Photographer:** Jane Gosden



**Caption:** NW coast, Chatham  
(Rekohu) Island  
**Photographer:** John Sawyer