



Atriplex buchananii

Common Name(s):

Buchanan's orache

Current Threat Status (2012):

Threatened - Nationally Vulnerable

Distribution:

Endemic. North, South, Stewart and Chatham Islands

Habitat:

An annual or short-lived perennial plant found in open, often heavily salt enriched, poorly draining clay or gravel/rock strewn ground. *Atriplex buchananii* is primarily a coastal species of open turfs or gravel field at or near the high tide mark. It is also frequently found on offshore islands growing in guano enriched soils or bare guano splattered rock. This species is also found inland in Central Otago on open ground usually within salt pans and slicks or on other salt enriched soils.

Features:

Annual or perennial, prostrate, procumbent to sub-erect creeping, mat-forming herb forming patches up 30 mm diameter. All parts initially covered in densely white to greyish farinose, mealy scales, these shedding on stems and old leaves with age. Stems much branched, fleshy at first becoming wiry and pliant with age, terete, very slender (appearing delicate), woody at base in perennial plants, with old stems covered in orange bark. Petioles 0-3 mm long, fleshy. Leaves 1-10(-20) x 0.5-6(-15) mm, white, whitish-grey, grey or white-green above, uniformly pale white-grey beneath, orbicular, broad-elliptic, broad-ovate, obovate to broadly lanceolate, margins entire; base subcordate to rounded or broad-cuneate; apices obtuse to acute. Flowers in leaf axils, solitary or in glomerules (clusters) of 2-10. Male flowers usually sub-terminal to terminal; perianth 1-1.5(-2) mm long, white, whitish-grey to grey; segments cut to 1/2 length of perianth tube. Stamens (3-)5, filaments and anthers sulphur-yellow. Female flowers 1 mm long, pale grey or whitish-grey, inconspicuous, style bearing 2 white, stigmas. Fruiting bracteoles rhombic-triangular, margins finely dentate. Fruit c. 1 mm diameter, circular to sub-circular; pericarp chartaceous and easily removed. Seed surface (testa) brown, red-brown to brownish-green

Flowering:

December - May

Fruiting:

January - August

Threats:

Generally uncommon and sporadic in its occurrences, though more common from Otago south to Stewart Island. Some populations are threatened by urban development and many by weeds

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 2009 Vol. 11 No. 4 pp. 285-309

For more information, visit:

http://nzpcn.org.nz/flora_details.asp?ID=224



Caption: Long Point, Catlins
Photographer: John Barkla



Caption: Chatham Islands
Photographer: John Sawyer