



Carmichaelia astonii

Common Name(s):

Astons Dwarf Broom

Current Threat Status (2012):

Threatened - Nationally Vulnerable

Distribution:

Endemic. New Zealand: South Island (Eastern Marlborough in a small area south of Ward, encompassing the Flaxbourne, Mead, Waima (Ure) River catchments, Weld Cone, Ward Beach and the Chalk Range).

Habitat:

A limestone endemic, restricted to sparsely vegetated rendzina and related steep land soils of medium to high fertility.

Features*:

Dwarf and spreading shrub, up to 0.2 × 0.5 m. Branches stout, ascending and horizontal, 10-25 mm diameter. Cladodes linear, striate, compressed, erect to spreading, green to green-bronze, frequently hairy when young (hairs sometimes retrorse), 30-95 × 4-8 mm; apex subacute to obtuse, yellow to yellow-green; leaf nodes 2-4. Leaves simple, obovate to oblanceolate, fleshy, green or green-bronze, present on seedlings, absent on adult plants, 6-8 × 2.0-5.5 mm; upper and lower surfaces hairy; apex emarginate to retuse; base cuneate; petiole hairy, c. 2 mm long. Leaves on cladodes reduced to a scale, triangular, glabrous, < 0.5 mm long; apex acute. Stipules free, triangular, 0.9-1.0 × 0.7-0.8 mm; upper surface glabrous; lower surface hairy, becoming glabrous with age; apex acute; margin hairy. Inflorescence a raceme, 1-4 per node, each with 1-4 flowers. Peduncle hairy, green, 7-8 mm long. Bracts triangular, glabrous, pale green, < 1 mm long; apex acute; margin hairy. Pedicel hairy, pale green, 2.5-8.0 mm long. Bracteoles at top of pedicel, green and occasionally flushed red, < 0.5 mm long; apex acute; margin hairy. Calyx campanulate, 4.5-5.5 × c.2.0 mm; inner surface glabrous, green; outer surface hairy, green and occasionally flushed red. Calyx lobes narrow-triangular, green and usually flushed red, 2.0-2.5 mm long; adaxial surface densely hairy; apex acute; two upper lobes usually appressed to base of standard; three lower lobes spreading away from keel. Standard obovate, patent, positioned in central area of keel, weakly keeled, margins recurved, c.12 × c.8 mm; central area of upper surface purple, margins white, sometimes purple-veined; lower surface white with a darkened central part; claw pale green, c.3 mm long; apex emarginate and occasionally mucronulate. Wings oblong, shorter than keel, c.9.0 × c. 2.5 mm; distal area of upper surface purple, proximal area pale green; lower surface white, purple-veined; auricle triangular, pale green, 1.0-1.25 mm long; claw pale green, 2.5-3.0 mm long; apex acute. Keel c.10 × c.3.5 mm; distal area of upper surface purple, proximal area white or pale green; auricle triangular, pale green, c.1 mm long; apex obtuse; claw pale green, 3.5-4.0 mm long. Stamens 9-11.5 mm long. Pistil exerted beyond stamens, c.12 mm long; ovary weakly falcate, glabrous; ovules 8-16. Pod oblong or oblanceolate, compressed, light grey or brown, valves often partially dehiscent, 14.0-23.0 × 4.0-7.5 mm; beak stout, pungent, 1-2 mm long. Seeds oblong-reniform, 4-8 per pod, olive green, green-yellow, or dull yellow, occasionally with black mottling, 2.5-3.5 × 1.5-3.0 mm.

Flowering:

January - December

Fruiting:

December - April

Threats:

A limestone endemic that is naturally restricted to a small geographical area. moderate-sized populations are known, and these appear to be secure though some are vulnerable to browse damage from goats, possums, and sheep. Of more concern is that seedlings are very rarely seen, and all populations are dominated by mature shrubs.

*Attribution:

Description adapted from: Heenan (1996)

References and further reading:

Heenan, P.B. 1995: A taxonomic revision of *Carmichaelia* (Fabaceae - Galegeae) in New Zealand (part I). *New Zealand Journal of Botany* 33: 455-475.

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=408



Caption: *Carmichaelia astonii*
Photographer: Ingrid Gruner



Caption: An image of the flowers
Photographer: Ingrid Gruner