



## SARATOGA HORTICULTURAL FOUNDATION, INC.

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### Coprosma 'Verde Vista'

This low growing, dense evergreen ground cover subject is a selection from a population of plants which have a wide distribution on gravelly soils throughout the temperate maritime regions of New Zealand. They have a wide tolerance of habitats from the windswept coastlines to coastal woodland situations. Fundamentally they are drought tolerant plants and will grow equally well in both sun and shade, however the environment in which they grow may well dramatically influence the form in which they develop.

It is probable that this selection - Coprosma 'Verde Vista' - is made from a form of C. repens or a hybrid of this species. The origins of 'Verde Vista' are somewhat obscure but as far as can be ascertained it was selected from a group of plants growing in Davis, California. The one plant was selected and cuttings brought to SHF in 1971.

C. repens is a 'plastic' species - that is - it will adapt its habit of growth to its environment. A plant growing in full sun will usually be flat and adpressed and will produce broadly oblong, sub fleshy leaves; but as the degree of shade increases the plant will develop short sturdy upright stems carrying small almost elliptic/ovate leaves; and in forest situations (i.e. in deep shade) it will develop into a small tree. 'Verde Vista' itself does not respond nearly so dramatically but nevertheless it will produce some short upright shoots unless grown in full exposure to sun; it is also possible that higher levels of irrigation will enhance this tendency to an upright habit.

'Verde Vista' has been selected as being a significantly improved example of the ground covering Coprosmas, as it produces a dense, glossy bright green, low growing and spreading plant. It is suggested as a successor to the more conventionally used C. x kirkii, being superior in virtually all its characteristics.

Coprosma 'Verde Vista' is a tight and dense growing plant, with a very compact and leafy habit which retains its bright glossy green appearance throughout the growing season. It has a high potential for weed suppression. Its growth rate and habit will depend very much on soil conditions and irrigation practices, but individually plants could spread to an eight foot diameter in ten years. In the initial year of

establishment it does not grow unusually fast, but once the root system is established it spreads relatively quickly. When planted on 30-36 inch centres it will normally make a complete cover in three growing seasons. In growth habit it will mound at its centre to about thirty inches and drop away at its periphery to an adpressed mat, but eventually as the branch numbers increase the mat will thicken to six or eight inches, subsequent growth habits will depend on the amount of insolation received, irrigation practices and individual plant spacings.

Coprosma 'Verde Vista' has proved to be extremely tolerant of irrigation practices: basically it is a low water use plant and once established in the landscape situation it is in effect a drought tolerant plant - as its provenance in New Zealand would suggest. However it is a robust and adaptable plant which will also tolerate more conventional regimes of summer irrigation: and as a consequence of this adaptability it has great value for use in those transitional situations on the margins of irrigated areas where water may or may not reach depending on all those variable features which influence irrigation water distribution in the landscape. Its adaptability is also manifest in its capacity to grow in most soil textures; it is unlikely to succeed in the worst of anthropomorphic soil situations but will tolerate even heavy soils if they are adequately drained.

It does not appear to be susceptible to soil borne diseases such as the water moulds and Rhizoctonia; and its stems and leaves are similarly free of pests and diseases. It may well however act as a harbour for snails.

It is a hardy plant which will withstand temperatures down to at least 15°F; with only a slight yellowing of the leaves; new leaves will quickly be developed however once growth begins again and such disfiguration is very short term.

This plant is a male selection and although the white flowers are produced in summer they are small and insignificant and are by no means noteworthy. As a consequence of this no fruits are produced and the danger of self sown and possibly atypical seedlings is avoided.

Overall this is a rugged, dependable, durable and reliable ground cover which maintains a bright, green appearance for a long season.

Low water use; ground cover; evergreen.