Lophomyrtus obcordata

Common Name(s):
Rohutu

Current Threat Status (2018):
Threatened - Nationally Critical

Distribution:
Endemic. North and South Islands. Patchy and often absent over large parts of the country. More common in the eastern North and South Island though locally prominent in some parts of western Northland and Auckland.

Habitat:
Coastal to montane in forest - though mostly found in coastal and lowland forested habitats. Lophomyrtus obcordata is often rather local over large parts of its range though it seems to be reasonably common on the Ponta and Kaipara Peninsulas where it grows on stable sand dunes in a forest dominated by an as yet unnamed species of Kunzea ericoides (known as racemiflorus to northern Maori) and referred to by de Lange & Murray 2004, de Lange et al., 2005 and de Lange et al. 2010 as Kunzea aff. ericoides (a)). Lophomyrtus obcordata is also occasionally dominant in alluvial forest remnants of the eastern South Island. In these places it is often parasitised by the dwarf mistletoe Korthalsella lindsayi.

Features*:
Shrub up to 0.6 m tall. Trunk slender, up to 0.2 m diameter. Dark greyish pink, chartaceous, flaking in large, irregular shreds, underbark pale cream. Branches numerous, erect, compactly branched to spreading. Branchlets initially angled maturing suberect, rather brittle, minutely pubescent. Leaves opposite (sometimes in fascicles), coriaceous, puberulent when young ( hairs patent), becoming glabrous with age, glandular punctate, oil glands colourless, leaf lamina and petioles shortly decurrent with branchlet; petiole 0.7-1.0 mm long, brittle; leaf lamina 5-12 × 5-10 mm, obclavate, cuneately narrowed to base, adaxially dark green to grey-green (sometimes tinged red), paler beneath (sometimes tinged pink). Flowers 4-merous, 6-8 mm diameter, borne in axillary, solitary monads on slender, 16-14(-20) mm long, pubescent pedicels. Hypanthium suborbicular, or narrowly elliptic, extending beyond every summit, glandular punctate, oil glands colourless (rarely pink tinged), calyx lobes 4, 1.0-1.5 mm long, persistent, spreading, pubescent, oblong, acute. Petals 6-8 × 5-8 mm, suborbicular, white, margins entire to slightly irregular, oil glands colourless. Stamens 60-80(-100 or more), free, in 4 weakly defined whors, filaments 6-8 mm long, anthers cream, dorsifixed, latrorse. Ovary inferior, 2-3 locular, ovules numerous, in a single row on each linear placenta. Style 6-8 mm long, slender, white, stigma capitate, scarcely dilated. Fruit a broadly ovoid, bright to dark red (rarely black or violet) 6-7 mm long berry. Seeds numerous, reniform, 2.0-4.3 mm diameter, tests pale brown, glossy ± smooth, very hard.

Flowering:
November - March

Fruiting:
January - May

Threats:
Seriously threatened by the arrival of myrtle rust in NZ. Conservation status amended in 2017, as per reference in "Attribution" below.

*Attribution:

References and further reading:


For more information, visit: