

Dacrydium cupressinum

COMMON NAME

rimu, red pine

SYNONYMS

Thalamia cupressina Spreng

FAMILY

Podocarpaceae

AUTHORITY

Dacrydium cupressinum Lamb.

FLORA CATEGORY

Vascular – Native

ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes

ENDEMIC GENUS

No

ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Trees & Shrubs - Gymnosperms

NVS CODE

DACCUP

CHROMOSOME NUMBER

2n = 20

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2017 | Not Threatened

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2012 | Not Threatened

2009 | Not Threatened

2004 | Not Threatened

DISTRIBUTION

Endemic. New Zealand: North Island (from North Cape (Otu) south), South Island and Stewart Island/Rakiura. Uncommon in large parts of the eastern South Island. Facultatively extinct on Banks Peninsula, where one natural tree is all that remains.

HABITAT

Lowland to montane forest—occasionally ascending to subalpine scrub.

WETLAND PLANT INDICATOR STATUS RATING

FACU: Facultative Upland

Occasionally is a hydrophyte but usually occurs in uplands (non-wetlands).



Female cones. Photographer: Department of Conservation, Licence: Public domain.



Fertilised cones. Photographer: Department of Conservation, Licence: Public domain.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Dioecious conifer 35–(60) m tall. Adult trees with trunk bare of branches for $\frac{3}{4}$ of length. **Trunk** stout, 1.5–2 m diam., bark dark brown, falling off in large thick flakes. **Wood** dark red. **Branches** in juveniles numerous, slender, branchlets pendulous. **Adult branches** few, spreading, branchlets slender, pendulous. **Leaves** dark green, bronze-green, red-green or orange, imbricate, those of juveniles 4–7–(10) mm, 0.5–1 mm wide, keeled, acute, linear-subulate, subfalcate, decurrent; those of subadults ascending, incurved 4–6 mm, rhomboid; of adults similar but appressed, 2–3 mm., rigid, subacute, trigonous. **Male and female “cones”** first appear on subadults. **Male cones (strobili)** solitary or paired, terminal 5–10 mm., oblong. **Pollen** yellow. **Ovules** solitary, terminal on up-curved branchlets. **Receptacle** a fleshy red or deep-orange cup 1–2 mm long. **Seed** oblong or elliptic-oblong, compressed in section, 3–3.8–(4) mm long, semi-glossy, dark-brown.

SIMILAR TAXA

A very distinctive species which could not be confused with any other indigenous conifer. The very young juveniles have a superficial similarity to seedlings of silver pine (*Manoao colensoi*) but differ by their much finer, more numerous, dull rather than glossy red-green leaves.

FLOWERING

December–March

FLOWER COLOURS

No flowers

FRUITING

Fruits take a year or more to mature and co-occur with young female cones, they are most frequently seen between February and May.

LIFE CYCLE

Arillate seeds are dispersed by frugivory (Thorsen et al., 2009).

PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

Easily grown from fresh seed. Can be grown from hard-wood cuttings but rather slow to strike.

THREATS

Not Threatened, although as a forest-type it has been greatly reduced through widespread logging. Very few intact examples of rimu-dominated forest remain in the North Island.

ETYMOLOGY

dacrydium: Tear drop

cupressinum: Cypress

WHERE TO BUY

Commonly cultivated and frequently sold by most commercial nurseries and outlets. A very popular garden tree.

ETHNOBOTANY

The first indigenous beer was brewed using the young tips of rimu (as spruce beer) by Captain Cook at Dusky Sound in 1773 (Kirk 1889).

TAXONOMIC NOTE

Rimu is the type of the genus *Dacrydium*.

ATTRIBUTION

Fact sheet prepared for NZPCN by P.J. de Lange 3 February 2006. Description adapted from Allan (1961), Webb & Simpson (2001), fresh material and herbarium specimens.

REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

- Allan HH. 1961. Flora of New Zealand, Volume I. Indigenous Tracheophyta: Psilopsida, Lycopsidea, Filicopsida, Gymnospermae, Dicotyledones. Government Printer, Wellington, NZ. 1085 p.
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- Thorsen MJ, Dickinson KJM, Seddon PJ. 2009. Seed dispersal systems in the New Zealand flora. *Perspectives in Plant Ecology, Evolution and Systematics* 11: 285–309. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ppees.2009.06.001>.
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NZPCN FACT SHEET CITATION

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<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/dacrydium-cupressinum/> (Date website was queried)

MORE INFORMATION

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