

Melicope ternata

COMMON NAME

wharangī

FAMILY

Rutaceae

AUTHORITY

Melicope ternata A.Cunn.

FLORA CATEGORY

Vascular – Native

ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes

ENDEMIC GENUS

No

ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Trees & Shrubs - Dicotyledons

NVS CODE

MELTER

CHROMOSOME NUMBER

2n = 36

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2017 | Not Threatened

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2012 | Not Threatened

2009 | Not Threatened

2004 | Not Threatened

BRIEF DESCRIPTION

Bushy small tree with glossy green leaves composed of three leaflets at the end of a long stalk and clusters of dry fruit enclosing a black shiny seed. Leaf blades 7-10cm, oval, three together on a long stalk. Flowers white. Fruit dry, splitting to show 2-3 seeds on a stalk.

DISTRIBUTION

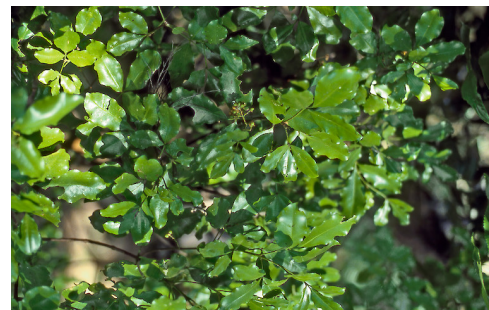
Endemic. Kermadec, Three Kings, North and South Islands.

HABITAT

Coastal to lowland forest, often favouring margin habitat.



Melicope ternata. Photographer: Wayne Bennett, Licence: CC BY-NC.



Mana Island. Photographer: Jeremy R. Rolfe, Date taken: 06/02/1987, Licence: CC BY.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Shrub or small tree up to 6 m tall. Branchlets slender, pale yellow-green when young. Leaves opposite, 3-foliolate, on petioles up to about 50 mm long; petiolules very short to 5 mm long. Lamina thinly coriaceous, (50)-70-100 x (20)-30-40 mm, subacute to acute, obovate-cuneate to elliptic- to ovate- or obovate-oblong, entire (all forms may be on same plant). Subfloral leaves may be 2-foliolate or single. Inflorescence of often paired axillary cymes, frequently tri-branched, on peduncles approximately 20 mm long; bracts minute, ovate; pedicels approximately 5 mm long. Flowers perfect or unisexual, 8-10 mm diameter. Sepals ovate-oblong, about 1.5 mm long, gland-dotted; petals greenish, ovate-oblong, concavo-convex, about 5 mm long, gland-dotted. Ovary glabrous, style short, stout. Disk annular, lobulate. Cocci approximately 5 mm long, pale brown, wrinkled and punctulose. Seed approximately 5 mm long, black, glossy, testa brittle.

SIMILAR TAXA

The hybrid between *M. simplex* x *M. ternata*, usually has trifoliate leaves which are usually smaller than this species and often darker green like *M. simplex*, not yellow/green as in *M. ternata*. Hybrid seedling may be more difficult to separate from this species.

FLOWERING

September - October

FLOWER COLOURS

Green

FRUITING

October – February (-April)

ETYMOLOGY

melicope: Honey cut

ternata: Triplets

TAXONOMIC NOTES

Where both species of *Melicope* co-exist hybrids may occur, these historically have been referred to as *M. mantelli*, they should be called *M. ternata* x *M. simplex*.

ATTRIBUTION

Description adapted by M. Ward from Allan (1961).

REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

Allan, H. H. 1961. Flora of New Zealand. Vol. 1. Wellington: Government Printer. Pg. 425-426.

MORE INFORMATION

<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/melicope-ternata/>