Metrosideros perforata

COMMON NAME
akatea

SYNONYMS
Leptospermum perforatum J.R.Forst. et G.Forst., Metrosideros scandens Sol. ex Gaertn.

FAMILY
Myrtaceae

AUTHORITY
Metrosideros perforata (J.R.Forst. et G.Forst.) A.Rich.

FLORA CATEGORY
Vascular – Native

ENDEMIC TAXON
Yes

ENDEMIC GENUS
No

ENDEMIC FAMILY
No

STRUCTURAL CLASS
Lianes & Related Trailing Plants - Dicotyledons

NVS CODE
METPER

CHROMOSOME NUMBER
2n = 22

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS
2017 | Threatened – Nationally Vulnerable | Qualifiers: DP, De

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES
2012 | Not Threatened
2009 | Not Threatened
2004 | Not Threatened

Metrosideros perforata. Photographer: Department of Conservation, Licence: Public domain.

Metrosideros perforata. Photographer: Department of Conservation, Licence: Public domain.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION
Woody long-climbing vine. Mature plants only reproductive. Leaves more or less circular, dark green above, pale green below, both surfaces covered in fine glandular spots (especially evident on leaf undersides). Flowers white (rarely pink) in dense, terminal, fluffy, clusters.

DISTRIBUTION
Endemic. New Zealand: Manawatāwhi / Three Kings Islands, North Island, South Island (to about northern Otago and northern Fiordland).

HABITAT
Coastal to montane. An abundant plant of open scrub, dense forest or rock-land. In forest and scrub situations climbing on other trees but also climbing up cliff faces, on rock outcrops, and forming a “shrubland” in loose talus

WETLAND PLANT INDICATOR STATUS RATING
FACU: Facultative Upland
Occasionally is a hydrophyte but usually occurs in uplands (non-wetlands).

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Vine up to 20 m (rarely more long). Growth dimorphic, juvenile and climbing vines sparingly branched, mature (adult reproductive state) heavily branched. **Bark** furrowed, dark grey to brown-black, ± tessellated, and flaking in tabular shards. **Branchlets** terete, ± invested in short dark brown setose hairs. **Leaves** close-set, coriaceous, glandular punctate (this especially evident on abaxial surface) subsessile; petioles 1.0–3.2 mm long, lamina 6–12 × 5–9 mm, broad-ovate, broad-oblong to suborbicular, obtuse, adaxially dark green, ± glabrous, abaxially very pale green; finely setose; margins recurved. **Inflorescences** in axillary few-flowered cymose botryia, these crowded towards apex of branchlets; peduncles and pedicels pubescent to setose; peduncles 10–40 mm long, pedicels 5–10 mm. **Hypanthium** broad-turbinate, initially fleshy, finely tomentose ± glabrescent; calyx lobes broadly deltoid, obtuse; petals caducous, 1.5–3.0 × 1.5–2.8 mm, suborbicular, white or pink; stamens numerous, 8–10 mm long, white (rarely pink). **Capsule** 4–5 mm diameter, 3-valved, subglobose, exserted, ± woody.

MANAAKI WHENUA ONLINE INTERACTIVE KEY

Key to the Myrtaceae of New Zealand

SIMILAR TAXA

Easily distinguished from all other indigenous *Metrosideros* by the small rounded "spotted" (glandular-punctate) leaves, which are dark green above and pale green below (the spotting is most evident on the leaf undersides), and by the dense clusters of white flowers. In its juvenile state it may be confused with juvenile vines of *Metrosideros carminea*. However, the young growth of Metrosideros carminea is distinctly pinkish and the leaf hairs are much longer and pink coloured. Despite the common name "white rata" Metrosideros perforata is not closely related to *Metrosideros albiflora*, which is a species virtually confined to northern New Zealand kauri (*Agathis australis*) forest, and which has much larger leaves (without obvious glandular spotting) and fewer, larger inflorescences.

FLOWERING

November–March

FLOWER COLOURS

White

FRUITING

February–May

PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

Easily grown from rooted pieces. Can be grown from semi-hardwood cuttings. However like all Metrosideros cuttings can be fickle to strike. A tough, resilient rata suitable for open situations and once established tolerant of drought and moderate frost.

THREATS

When myrtle rust (*Austropuccinia psidii*) was detected in New Zealand (May 2017) the conservation status was upgraded as a precautionary measure to 'Threatened – Nationally Vulnerable' because, on best advice, it was believed that no indigenous Myrtaceae had resistance to the myrtle rust disease (de Lange et al. 2018).
Myrtle rust (*Austropuccinia psidii*) is an invasive fungus that threatens native myrtle species. Learn more myrtlerust.org.nz.

ETYMOLOGY

metrosideros: Iron heart
perforata: From the Latin perforatus 'pierced with holes', depending on the species this may refer to the foliage covered in punctate oil glands

ATTRIBUTION

Fact sheet prepared for NZPCN by P.J. de Lange (5 January 2013). Description based on fresh material.

NZPCN FACT SHEET CITATION

Please cite as: de Lange, P.J. (Year at time of access): Metrosideros perforata Fact Sheet (content continuously updated). New Zealand Plant Conservation Network.
https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/metrosideros-perforata/ (Date website was queried)

MORE INFORMATION

https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/metrosideros-perforata/