

Myrsine aquilonia

COMMON NAME

Poor Knights matipo

SYNONYMS

None

FAMILY

Primulaceae

AUTHORITY

Myrsine aquilonia de Lange et Heenan

FLORA CATEGORY

Vascular – Native

ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes

ENDEMIC GENUS

No

ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Trees & Shrubs - Dicotyledons

NVS CODE

MYRAQL

CHROMOSOME NUMBER

2n = 46

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2017 | At Risk – Relict | Qualifiers: PD

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2012 | At Risk – Relict | Qualifiers: PD

2009 | At Risk – Relict | Qualifiers: PD

2004 | Sparse

BRIEF DESCRIPTION

Bushy tall shrub with a ringed smooth trunk bearing small heart-shaped leaves inhabiting coastal areas in eastern Northland and offshore Islands. Leaves 12-28mm long by 10-17mm wide, with a large notch at the tip, on erect branches. Fruit purple, 3-8-4.7mm long.

DISTRIBUTION

Endemic. New Zealand, North Island: Known from the Poor Knights Islands, Rauhomaumau Island, Rangaunu Harbour, and Te Arai (Heenan & de Lange 2004)..

HABITAT

Coastal scrub, kanuka forest and mangrove swamps.



cultivated, July. Photographer: John Smith-Dodsworth, Licence: CC BY-NC.



cultivated, July. Photographer: John Smith-Dodsworth, Licence: CC BY-NC.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Dioecious, suckering shrub or small tree up to 12 m tall. Trunks with ring-like constrictions. Branchlets erect, somewhat spreading, not divaricating, usually crowded and leafy. Adult leaves 12-28 x 10-17 mm, without prominent blotch at lamina base, obovate, leathery, entire with leaf apex deeply retuse to obcordate. Flowers axillary, solitary or in fascicles of up to 6. Female flowers with 4 sepals and 4 petals, petals free, 1.6-1.7 x 1-1.1 mm, broadly elliptic, green flushed maroon. Style 0.2-0.3 mm, stigma 0.6-0.8 x 0.6-0.8 mm, stamens rudimentary. Male flowers similar. petals 2.5-2.8 x 1.2-1.3 mm, obovate, stamens prominent with anthers 1.2-1.5 x 0.6-0.8 mm, gynoecium rudimentary. Fruit a circular purple or violet drupe 3.8-4.7 x 3.5-4.7 mm.

SIMILAR TAXA

M. aquilonia differs from *M. coxii* by the non-rhizomatous habit, ring-like trunk constrictions, leafy branches, and broader deeply retuse leaves, from *M. umbricola* by the ring-like trunk constrictions, taller heavily branched growth form, and uniformly lighter green coloured, deeply retuse leaves. (see *M. divaricata*)

FLOWERING

August

FLOWER COLOURS

Green, Red/Pink

FRUITING

December-January

PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

Easy from hardwood cuttings and fresh seed. Fast growing and tolerant of a range of conditions and moisture regimes.

THREATS

Abundant on the Poor Knights Island group where it is often the co-dominant species in the main vegetation types. Outside these islands it is very scarce. Previously regarded (as *Myrsine* aff. *divaricata* (AK 228797; Poor Knights)) as Sparse in de Lange et al. (2004).

ETYMOLOGY

myrsine: Myrrh

WHERE TO BUY

Popular and widely sold, usually as *Myrsine* 'Poor Knights'.

ATTRIBUTION

Fact Sheet Prepared by P.J. de Lange (1 November 2009). Description based on Heenan & de Lange (2004).

REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

de Lange, P.J.; Norton, D.A.; Heenan, P.B.; Courtney, S.P.; Molloy, B.P.J.; Ogle, C.C.; Rance, B.D.; Johnson, P.N.; Hitchmough, R. 2004: Threatened and uncommon plants of New Zealand. *New Zealand Journal of Botany* 42: 45-76.

Heenan, P.B.; de Lange, P.J. 2004: *Myrsine aquilonia* and *M. umbricola* (Myrsinaceae), two new species from New Zealand. *New Zealand Journal of Botany* 42: 753-769

NZPCN FACT SHEET CITATION

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MORE INFORMATION

<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/myrsine-aquilonia/>