

Pittosporum tenuifolium

COMMON NAME

kohukohu, kōhūhū, black matipo

SYNONYMS

Trichilia monophylla Richard, *Pittosporum fasciculatum* Hook.f., *Pittosporum tenuifolium* subsp. *fasciculatum* (Hook.f.) Kirk, *Pittosporum tenuifolium* var. *fasciculatum* (Hook.f.) Kirk, *Pittosporum colensoi* var. *fasciculatum* (Hook.f.) Cheeseman, *Pittosporum tenuifolium* Sol. ex Gaertn. subsp. *tenuifolium*

FAMILY

Pittosporaceae

AUTHORITY

Pittosporum tenuifolium Sol. ex Gaertn.

FLORA CATEGORY

Vascular – Native

ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes

ENDEMIC GENUS

No

ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Trees & Shrubs - Dicotyledons

NVS CODE

PITTEN

CHROMOSOME NUMBER

2n = 24

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2017 | Not Threatened

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2012 | Not Threatened

2009 | Not Threatened

2004 | Not Threatened

BRIEF DESCRIPTION

Small tree with very dark twigs bearing pale green shiny wavy thin leaves and very dark flowers and 12 mm wide capsules that split into two or three to show the black sticky seeds. Leaves usually 2–4 cm long.

DISTRIBUTION

Endemic and widespread throughout country.

HABITAT

A small tree of coastal to montane shrubland and forested habitats. Preferring successional habitats.

WETLAND PLANT INDICATOR STATUS RATING

FACU: Facultative Upland

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



Bartons Bush, Trentham, Upper Hutt.
Photographer: Jeremy R. Rolfe, Date taken:
28/09/2005, Licence: CC BY.



Bartons Bush, Trentham, Upper Hutt.
Photographer: Jeremy R. Rolfe, Date taken:
28/09/2005, Licence: CC BY.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Shrub or small gynodioecious tree up to 10 m tall (usually much less). Trunk 0.3–0.4(–0.6) m diam., stout, clad in dark grey-black or brown persistent bark. Branches numerous, erect then spreading. Branchlets and young leaves pubescent, hairs pale yellow or cream. Petioles short, somewhat fleshy. Leaves alternate, (10–)30(–70) x (5–)10(–20) mm, leathery, pale-green to dark green above, lighter below, oblong, oblong-ovate or elliptic-obovate, apex obtuse to acute, rarely acuminate, margins entire, often undulose. Flowers solitary or in axillary cymes, rather fragrant, especially at night. Pedicels stout, pale green, fleshy, bracts entire, lanceolate, caducous. Sepals narrowly ovate-oblong, subacute to obtuse, silky hairy. Petals 12 mm long, lanceolate, dark red, black (rarely yellow or white). Capsules 2-valved (rarely 3), subglobose, valves woody, black when mature, long persistent. Seeds immersed in sticky, red or yellow viscid pulp.

FLOWERING

October–November (–December)

FLOWER COLOURS

Black, Red/Pink

FRUITING

January - March

PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

Easy from fresh seed. Can be grown from semi-hardwood cuttings.

ETYMOLOGY

pittosporum: Pitch seed

tenuifolium: Thin leaf

WHERE TO BUY

Very common in cultivation. Kohuhu and cultivars are commonly sold by commercial nurseries and are also grown throughout the world.

ATTRIBUTION

Fact sheet prepared for NZPCN by P.J. de Lange 10 January 2004. Description adapted from Allan (1961).

REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

Allan, H.H. 1961: Flora of New Zealand. Vol. I. Wellington, Government Printer

NZPCN FACT SHEET CITATION

Please cite as: de Lange, P.J. (Year at time of access): *Pittosporum tenuifolium* Fact Sheet (content continuously updated). New Zealand Plant Conservation Network.

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

MORE INFORMATION

<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/pittosporum-tenuifolium/>