

# Pterophylla sylvicola

## COMMON NAME

Towai, tawhero

## SYNONYMS

Weinmannia sylvicola Sol. ex A.Cunn.; Weinmannia silvicola Sol. ex A.Cunn. orth. var.; Weinmannia silvicola Sol. ex A.Cunn. var. silvicola, Weinmannia silvicola var. betulina (A.Cunn.) Hook.f.

## FAMILY

Cunoniaceae

## AUTHORITY

Pterophylla sylvicola (Sol. ex A.Cunn.) Pilon et H.C.Hopkins

## FLORA CATEGORY

Vascular – Native

## ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes

## ENDEMIC GENUS

No

## ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

## STRUCTURAL CLASS

Trees & Shrubs - Dicotyledons

## NVS CODE

WEISIL

## CHROMOSOME NUMBER

2n = 30

## CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2017 | Not Threatened

## PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2012 | Not Threatened

2009 | Not Threatened

2004 | Not Threatened

## BRIEF DESCRIPTION

Small tree with a blotched trunk bearing leaves consisting of three bluntly-toothed leaflets (lowest pair much smaller) and spikes of small white bristly flowers inhabiting northern North Island. Leaf stem grooved on top, slightly hairy (lens needed). Juveniles with up to nine pairs of leaflets, reddish underneath.

## DISTRIBUTION

Occurs from Te Paki as far as the Waitakere Ranges and Kaimai Range.

## WETLAND PLANT INDICATOR STATUS RATING

FACU: Facultative Upland

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



Towai. Photographer: Wayne Bennett, Licence: CC BY-NC.



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## DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Tree up to 15 metres tall or larger with a trunk up to 1 m. diameter; young branchlets, petioles, peduncles and pedicels ± densely pilose-pubescent. Leaves of seedlings simple to 5-jugate, some pairs trifoliate, membranous; leaflets up to 3 × 1 cm., elliptic to elliptic-obovate in outline, incised-serrate. Leaves of juveniles and of reversion shoots up to 10-jugate, membranous; leaflets ovate-elliptic to elliptic or elliptic-oblong, acute to subacute; terminal lft up to 8 × 3 cm., on petiolule c. 1 cm. long; lateral subsessile, diminishing downward from 6 × 3 cm. to 2.5 × 2 cm. Leaves of adults of two main forms (intermediate forms not infrequent): (a) leaflets mostly obtuse, 3-5-foliate, rarely simple, coriaceous., bluntly crenate-serrate to serrate, obovate-oblong to broad-elliptic or elliptic; terminal leaflet 4-6 × 2-3 cm., on petiolule c. 1 cm. long; lateral 4-3 × 2 cm.;- (b) leaves 3-5-foliate, rarely simple, coriaceous, leaflets mostly acute to subacute, serrate to crenate-serrate, elliptic; terminal leaflet 4-7 × 2-3 cm., lateral 7-4 × 3-2 cm. Racemes 8-12 cm. long, many-flowered, pedicels 2-3 mm. long, numerous axis; sepals c. 1 mm. long, narrow-ovate to subulate-obtuse, persistent; petals c. 1.5 cm. long, ovate to oblong, white to pale rose; stamens exserted; styles 2.5-4 mm. long, persistent. Capsules 4-5 cm. long, glab. or nearly so; seeds with tuft of hairs at apex and base.

## SIMILAR TAXA

The juvenile foliage is similar to that of *Ackama rosifolia*. It can be distinguished by the lack of domatia on the underside of the leaves. Towai also has narrow, linear stipules that fall off early.

## FLOWER COLOURS

White

## TAXONOMIC NOTES

*Pterophylla sylvicola* var. *betulina* is not regarded as distinct from *P. sylvicola* by the NZPCN as the characters attributed to it occur sporadically throughout the range of *P. sylvicola* s.s. However, it is true that in some more southerly populations the form known as var. *betulina* can be dominant.

## ATTRIBUTION

Fact Sheet prepared by P. J. de Lange 17 November 2011: Description adapted from Allan (1961)

## REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

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

McKenzie, R. 1960. The distributional overlap of *Weinmannia sylvicola* and *Weinmannia racemosa*. Auckland Botanical Society Journal, 17: 7-8

## NZPCN FACT SHEET CITATION

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## MORE INFORMATION

<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/pterophylla-sylvicola/>