

Toronia toru

COMMON NAME

toru, toro, toto, mihimihi

SYNONYMS

Persoonia toru A.Cunn.

FAMILY

Proteaceae

AUTHORITY

Toronia toru (A.Cunn.) L.A.S.Johnson et B.G.Briggs

FLORA CATEGORY

Vascular – Native

ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes

ENDEMIC GENUS

Yes

ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Trees & Shrubs - Dicotyledons

NVS CODE

TORTOR

CHROMOSOME NUMBER

2n = 28

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2017 | Not Threatened

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2012 | Not Threatened

2009 | Not Threatened

2004 | Not Threatened

BRIEF DESCRIPTION

Small bushy tree with long narrow leathery smooth edged-leaves that are yellowish when young and red when dying. Leaves 16-20cm long by 8-15mm wide, sharp tipped. Flowers yellowish or white, small, in clusters. Fruit dark purple, 12-18mm long.

DISTRIBUTION

Endemic. North Island from Te Pahi south to the mouth of the Waihaha River, on the western side of Lake Taupo. However south of Auckland, toru is mostly found in the east from the Coromandel throughout the Bay of Plenty to about Atiamuri. In the western Waikato it is known locally from the northern end of the Aotea Harbour, near Kawhia (Rakaunui), Te Kauri and Whenuapo in the Taumatotara Range. The species also occurs in a small portion of Tairāwhiti / East Cape



Toronia toru. Photographer: Wayne Bennett, Licence: CC BY-NC.



Kennedy Bay, November. Photographer: John Smith-Dodsworth, Licence: CC BY-NC.

HABITAT

Coastal to montane mostly on infertile soils, in open shrubland (especially gumland), early successional forest and along ridge lines and around slip scars in kauri (*Agathis australis*) and/or tanekaha (*Phyllocladus trichomanoides*) dominated forest. It is locally abundant on silicic igneous rocks such as rhyolite, ignimbrite and pumice.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Small dioecious (or gynodioecious) tree up to 12 m tall; trunk 1 or more arising from base, 0.2-0.3 m dbh; bark firm (not flaking), grey, grey-brown, brown or mottled grey, grey-brown. Branches usually numerous, initially upright, then spreading (sometimes decurved and/or pendulous); branchlets initially semi-terete (\pm compressed on one or more sides), maturing terete, minutely puberulous. Leaves alternate, semi-whorled, glabrous, \pm fleshy and thickly coriaceous, bright green to yellow green (often mottled or spotted with red), glossy, midrib light green or yellow, raised, veins not evident, margins entire, thickened and often distinctly paler than rest of lamina; petioles stout, fleshy, 2-4 mm long, yellow-green or red. Lamina 160-250 mm \times 8-15 mm, narrow linear-lanceolate, abruptly acute or apiculate, base attenuate (gradually narrowing to petiole). Inflorescences axillary, bracteate, 6-12(-20)-flowered racemes up to 60 mm long; rhachis and pedicels pubescent, indumentum ferruginous; bracts basal, minute, \pm caducous. Flowers fragrant, tepals 5-9 mm long, linear-ovate to ovate, abaxially pubescent, indumentum ferruginous, adaxially yellow, margins undulate, \pm pubescent; staminate flowers with 4 stamens, ovary rudimentary in some flowers possibly functional; pistillate flowers with 4 rudimentary stamen, ovary urceolate, subsessile, style short, stigma oblique. Drupe 1(-2)-seeded, 12-18 mm long, ellipsoid, exocarp succulent, flesh red; endocarp 9-14 mm long, elliptic (sometimes broadly elliptic or ovate) or assymetric, hard, surface reticulate and finely striate, semi-glossy, light brown to brown, reticulate.

SIMILAR TAXA

Toro (*Myrsine salicina*) is superficially similar (as indicated by the Maori name). Toro is easily distinguished from *Toronia*. It has narrow-elliptic, narrow-oblong, to linear-oblong leaves with obtuse apices, rather than narrow linear-lanceolate, abruptly acute or apiculate leaves and flowers borne in dense fascicles rather than racemes. willow-leaved hakea (*Hakea salicifolia*) with which toru sometimes grows is vegetatively similar but has white flowers borne in fascicles and hard woody, beaked fruits.

FLOWERING

September - January

FLOWER COLOURS

White, Yellow

FRUITING

October - May

PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

Easily grown in a warm, sunny site. Once established toru is a very attractive small tree. As is typical of other members of the family it does best in infertile soils and should never have any phosphate containing fertilisers applied to it. Toru is said to be frost-sensitive.

ATTRIBUTION

Fact sheet prepared for NZPCN by P.J. de Lange 10 February 2011. Description adapted from Allan (1961) and Webb & Simpson (2001).

REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

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

Webb, C.J.; Simpson, M.J.A. 2001: Seeds of New Zealand Gymnosperms and Dicotyledons. Christchurch, Manuka Press.

NZPCN FACT SHEET CITATION

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MORE INFORMATION

<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/toronia-toru/>