Avicennia marina subsp. australasica

Common Name(s):
manawa, mangrove

Current Threat Status (2012):
Not Threatened

Distribution:
Indigenous. New Zealand: North Island from Parengarenga Harbour south to Kawhia and Ohiwa Harbours, Australia (Queensland, New South Wales, Victoria), Lord Howe Island. In New Zealand Avicennia has been deliberately and extremely irresponsibly naturalised at Tolaga Bay, Mohokatino River, and formerly in the Hutt River and Parapara Inlet (Golden Bay) - where it has since been eradicated.

Habitat:
Strictly coastal, usually inhabiting tidal river banks and river flats, estuaries and shallow harbour entrances. An important vegetation type and key ecosystem of many northern North Island harbours and estuaries. Generally favoring mud or silt-rich substrates but also found on sand, especially along channels. Avicennia flourishes where silt and mud has accumulated and in some harbours, especially those abutting cities it has become a problem species. The increase of Avicennia is however a symptom of a more serious issue, that is the impact of increased sedimentation rates within harbours whose catchments have been seriously degraded and/or deforested. It should also be noted that the argument that Avicennia ecosystems in New Zealand are as productive as tropical mangal systems has yet to be demonstrated conclusively. In many places Avicennia has replaced the demonstrably more important and productive Zostera grass beds with potentially serious long-term consequences for our near shore fisheries.

Features*:
Small tree or shrub or intertidal zones (usually estuaries and tidal river flats). Growth habit variable, if of tree form then reaching up to 12 m tall with a narrow to broad spreading canopy; if of shrub form then with plants wider than tall up to 2 m tall and 1.4 m across (usually reduced to a shrub within muddy ground as well as in the southern part of range). Roots spreading bearing numerous, erect pneumatopores. Bark on mature trees grey, furrowed; branches spreading, rather stout but brittle (snapping readily); branchlets ± finely pubescent, glabrate, tomentum greyish-brown, often absent in seedlings. Leaves opposite, coriaceous, on stout, narrowly winged petioles 5-10 mm long; lamina coriaceous, 50-120 × 20-50 mm, elliptic, elliptic-ovate, elliptic-ovate, ovate, oblongate to a rhombic, apex acute to obtuse (rarely mucronate, then with macro 2-8 mm long, this often caducous), base attenuate, margins entire though often slightly recurved; adaxially dark green, glossy, glabrous, abaxially lighter green to almost glaucous, surface dull densely clad in caducous scurfy white to buff-coloured tomentum. Inflorescences usually axillary in upper leaf axils (very rarely terminal), in 3-8(-10)-flowered cymes borne on erect 4-angled pubescent peduncles 15-25 mm long. Flowers c.6-7 mm diameter, sessile or subsessile. Calyx deeply 5-lobed; calyx lobes 2.5-3.0 mm long, ovate, weakly keeled or not, adaxially sericeous hairy. Corolla ± rotate, corolla tube 1.0-1.2 mm long; lobes 4, spreading, 2.5-3.2, dark yellow or orange, ovate, adaxially glabrous, abaxially finely sericeous hairy. Stamens 4, inserted in corolla throat. Ovary 1-locular (imperfectly divided into 4); ovules 4; style 2-lobed. Fruit a 1-seeded capsule, 15-30 mm long, yellow-brown to light brown, circular or broadly ovate, ± compressed with an obtuse to subacute apex and rounded base, dehiscing into 2 valves, adaxial valve surface finely cilia short hairs and sessile spherical glabers, smooth, coriaceous.

Flowering:
February - April

Fruiting:
December - January

Threats:
Not Threatened

*Attribution:

References and further reading:

For more information, visit: