Dianella haematica

Common Name(s):
swamp blueberry, swamp ink berry, swamp Dianella

Current Threat Status (2012):
Not Threatened

Distribution:
Endemic. North Island. Te Paki south to at least the Mamaku Plateau and near Te Awamutu.

Habitat:
A coastal to lowland wetland species favouring high moor restiad dominated peat bogs. However, it is also known from low moor systems and transitional bogs, the margins of swamps developed within geothermal areas and even from the floating sudy communities developed around peat lakes.

Features*:
Upright, densely tussock-forming evergreen perennial herb; forming very tight, compact and upright clumps; rhizomes up to 20 mm long. Leaves 1-2 m long, 18-25 mm wide, uniformly olive-green to dull dark green, discolourous, uniformly upright, slightly recurved, sometimes drooping, or more or less flat, lamina smooth and more or less glossy; margin and abaxial midrib with obscure to prominent minute teeth; apex subacute to more or less obtuse, cucullate; leaf sheaths equitant, tightly clasping, surface and margin weakly to strongly flushed blood-red, red-maroon or pink, especially near base; apex subacute to more or less obtuse, cucullate. Inflorescence erect, 1-2 m long, usually among the leaves; scape slender, arching base asymmetric up to 8.5 x 5.3 mm diameter; panicle 400-700 mm long, branches spreading, short, regularly spaced; cauline leaves subtending branches, leaf-like at the base but reducing in size and becoming bract-like distally; cymes 3-5-flowered; pedicels 9-20 mm long, slightly recurved, terete; bracteoles 1.0-1.2 x c.0.2 mm, narrow-triangular, subtending pedicels, caducous. Flowers nodding, 10-11 mm diameter, opening mid-morning, collapsing late afternoon, perianth segments patent to slightly recurved; sepals 4.8-5.5 x 1.9-2.0 mm, oblong, undersides olive-green flushed red-brown, upper surface paler, apex obtuse; petals 4.1-4.2 x 2.9-3.0 mm, obovate, white, midvein olive-green, apex obtuse to retuse; filaments 6, 1.2-1.4 mm long, white; struma 0.8-1.3 x 0.6-0.7 mm, short oblong to oblong-ovate, yellow, minutely papillose; ovary 1.3-1.5 x 1.3 mm, green, more or less globular; style 1.4-1.5 mm long, white. Berry 8-20 x 7-10 mm, ovoid to oblong, grey-white and dull to strong violet-blue and glossy, pericarp spongy. Seeds 1.8-2.5 x 2.3-3.2 mm, ovoid, black, shiny.

Flowering:
September - November

Fruiting:
November - April

Threats:
Seriously at risk from wetland drainage - especially in the greater Waikato (which appears to be its main centre of distribution). Also vulnerable to competition from wetland weeds such as Royal Fern (Osmunda regalis L.) and grey willow (Salix cinerea L.). Over large parts of its Waikato range it now survives on the margins of drained peat bogs lining roadside ditches where it is vulnerable to weed spraying. These losses are tempered by the high probability that as a new species its exact range has yet to be determined. Previously regarded (as Dianella aff. nigra (b) (AK 252911; Kopouatai)) as Sparse in de Lange et al. (2004).

*Attribution:

References and further reading:
de Lange et al., 2004, Threatened and uncommon plants of New Zealand. New Zealand Journal of Botany 42: 45-76.

For more information, visit:

Caption: Hauraki swamp
Photographer: John Smith-Dodsworth

Caption: Hauraki swamp, Dec.
Photographer: John Smith-Dodsworth