Myoporum semotum

Common Name(s):
Chatham Islands ngaio

Current Threat Status (2012):
Nationally Vulnerable

Distribution:
Endemic. Chatham Islands: Rangiauria (Pitt Island), Mangere, Little Mangere, Rabbit and Rangatira (South-East) Islands.

Habitat:
Coastal forest and scrub where it is often the dominant canopy species.

Features*:
Tree up to 14m tall, trunk up to 0.50m dbh, bark smooth to lightly furrowed and pale brown to cream-brown. Branchlets prominently angled, smooth and usually lacking tubercles, but occasionally weakly tuberculate, glabrous, non-resinous, leaf scars raised. Leaf bud and emerging leaves usually black, resinous. Leaves 70-100 x 25-35 mm, ovate, broadly elliptic, oblong-broadly elliptic to occasionally elliptic, glabrous, discolorous, alternate, coriaceous; secretory cavities obscure, minute, immersed in lamina; base cuneate; margins finely serrate distally, sometimes entire; apex acute to sometimes subacute; abaxial surface with midrib prominently raised. Flowers 17.0-18.5mm in diameter, 1-5 per axil, variable number on same branch; pedicels terete, 3-12mm long, glabrous. Sepals 5, 1.3-3.0 x 0.7-1.0mm, narrowly triangular, attenuate, glabrous, apex acute. Corolla bud pale white, open flower white, pink-brown or purple to lavender-purple spotted on lobes and in tube; lobes 4.5-6.5 x 4.0-4.5 mm long, 3.5-5.5 mm across; outer surface of lobes and tube glabrous; inner surface of lobes and tube furnished with succulent hairs; tube hairs c.0.15 mm long, lobe hairs up to 1.0 mm. Stamens 4; filaments 5.0-5.5 mm long, glabrous, tapered toward apex, exserted, inserted about one-third from base of corolla tube; anthers 0.9-1.3 x 0.7-0.9 mm, green, glabrous, oval, 2-3-locular with one ovule per locule; style 2.8-4.0mm long, white, with pilose patent hairs toward base. Fruit a drupe; exocarp white when immature, becoming purple when mature, drying brown; endocarp 5.0-9.0 x 4.0-5.5 mm, woody, hard, broadly elliptic, elliptic-oblong to ovoid, not compressed, prominently 3-5 angled, apex acute to apiculate, base obtuse; seed 2.8-3.0 x 0.9-1.1 mm, oblong, pale orange-yellow. Description from Heenan & de Lange (2011).

Flowering:
November - February

Fruiting:
May

Threats:
Threatened by unrestricted stock access and pig damage. The species is secure - though very uncommon - on Rangatira and Little Mangere, and is being actively replanted as part of the forest restoration process on Mangere Island. One shrub is known from Rabbit Island. Where stock and pig access is restricted recruitment is evident with most size classes present. These observations suggest that with simple management, i.e. fencing and excluding browsing animals Myoporum populations should recover quickly. Currently there seems to be no ngaio present on Rangiauria, as it is very likely that it will hybridise with the Chatham Islands Myoporum it is important to ensure that ngaio is not planted on that island.

*Attribution:
Fact Sheet prepared for the NZPCN by: P.J. de Lange (22 April 2011).

References and further reading:


For more information, visit: