

Anisotome acutifolia

COMMON NAME

Snares Islands anisotome

SYNONYMS

Ligusticum acutifolium Kirk, *Aciphylla acutifolia* (Kirk) Cockayne

FAMILY

Apiaceae

AUTHORITY

Anisotome acutifolia (Kirk) Cockayne

FLORA CATEGORY

Vascular – Native

ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes

ENDEMIC GENUS

No

ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Herbs - Dicotyledons other than Composites

NVS CODE

ANIACU

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2017 | Threatened – Nationally Critical | Qualifiers: CD, IE, OL, RR, St

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2012 | Threatened – Nationally Critical | Qualifiers: CD, IE, OL, RR, St

2009 | At Risk – Naturally Uncommon | Qualifiers: OL, IE

2004 | Range Restricted

DISTRIBUTION

Endemic. Snares Islands where it is known from North East and Broughton islands.

HABITAT

In open ground on margin of dense *Olearia lyallii* forest, and also recorded from dense *Poa foliosa* tussock land. Growing semi-shaded sites on deep, permanently damp, peaty soil enriched with bird guano.



DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Stout, perennial, shortly creeping, stoloniferous herb reaching up to 2 m tall when flowering. Stolons up to 0.3 m long, stout, fleshy, when bruised leaking clear fluid. Basal leaves numerous, coriaceous, 0.50–0.70 m × 0.15–0.20 m, dark green, 2–3-pinnate; primary leaflets in 5–7 pairs, ovate, shortly petiolulate, subcoriaceous, prominently veined; secondary leaflets ovate to lanceolate; pinnately or pinnatifidly divided into deeply toothed and incised segments; teeth acute, not piliferous; petioles 0.2–0.35 m × 4–10 mm, cylindrical; sheaths 40–80 × 25–40 mm, prolonged at apex into an undivided membranous ligule 40–80 mm long; sheaths of cauline leaves inflated; peduncles 90–150 mm long. Inflorescence axis up to 2 m tall and 13 mm diameter at first node. Flowers dirty white to pale pinkish with a slight foetid odour. Staminate plants not described. Pistillate plants bearing an involucre of few linear bracts 6–8 × 1–1.5 mm or not; involucre of several linear bracteoles 7.0–10.0 mm × 0.5–1.0 mm; rays 20–30, 10–25 mm long; pedicels 20–50, 3–5 mm long; styles robust, 0.5–1.0 mm long, divergent. Mericarp 4.0–5.0 × 2.5–3.0 mm long, narrowly elliptic to elliptic, rarely ovate-elliptic, 4.0–4.8(–5.3) mm long; apex and base usually obtuse, sometimes narrow to apex; 5-ribbed, ribs even, equal, thin, narrowly winged with a fine hyaline margin. Surface dull, ribs pale to light orange-yellow, yellow or orange; vittae obscured on dorsal surface, rarely visible, and if so grey brown.

SIMILAR TAXA

The only species of *Anisotome* present on the Snares, *A. acutifolia* is similar to very large states of *A. lyallii* Hook.f., and is evidently related to it. The species is distinguished from *A. lyallii* and indeed all other large indigenous *Anisotome* by the ligulate leaf sheath (a condition seen otherwise only in the diminutive alpine *A. flexuosa* J.W. Dawson and *A. imbricata* (Hook.f.) Cockayne. A similar though less well defined structure is seen in *A. antipoda* Hook.f. and *A. latifolia* Hook.f., the two other large subantarctic species. *Anisotome acutifolia* is poorly known and would repay critical study both taxonomically and also because it is known from so few plants.

FLOWERING

December -January

FLOWER COLOURS

Red/Pink, White

FRUITING

January-February

LIFE CYCLE

Winged mericarps are dispersed by wind (Thorsen et al., 2009).

PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

Difficult. Should not be removed from the wild. This species has never been successfully cultivated.

THREATS

Believed not to be threatened. However, it is known from only a handful of sites (which may even comprise single plants). It is almost certainly incorrectly listed not because it is actively threatened but rather because the total area of occupancy is believed less than 1 ha. About 1000–3000 mature plants are known but few seedlings have ever been seen, and many of the plants observed could be derived through vegetative spread.

ETYMOLOGY

anisotome: Unequal sided

acutifolia: From the Latin acutus 'sharp' and folius 'leaf', with pointed leaves

WHERE TO BUY

Not commercially available

CULTURAL USE/IMPORTANCE

A population based genetic study of this species is needed to ascertain how many distinct individuals are. *Anisotome acutifolia* is in some respects intermediate between *A. lyallii* and *A. latifolia* and it may have evolved through past hybridisation between these two species.

ATTRIBUTION

Fact sheet prepared by P.J. de Lange for NZPCN (1 June 2013)

REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

Thorsen, M. J.; Dickinson, K. J. M.; Seddon, P. J. 2009: Seed dispersal systems in the New Zealand flora. *Perspectives in Plant Ecology, Evolution and Systematics* 11(4): 285–309.

NZPCN FACT SHEET CITATION

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MORE INFORMATION

<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/anisotome-acutifolia/>