

# Ascarina lucida var. lucida

## COMMON NAMES

Hutu

## BIOSTATUS

Native – Endemic taxon

## CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2023 | Not Threatened

[Jump to previous conservation statuses](#)

## CATEGORY

Vascular

## STRUCTURAL CLASS

Trees & Shrubs - Dicotyledons

## SIMPLIFIED DESCRIPTION

Small bushy tree of wetter forests. Leaves glossy, yellow green, with coarse black-tipped teeth on margins. Flowers pinkish, in sprays. Fruit small, white.

## FLOWER COLOURS

Green, Red/Pink

## DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Glabrous monoecious shrub or small tree up to 8 m; trunk up to 300 mm diameter. Branchlets slender, becoming striate, dark purple. Interpetiolar stipules conspicuous, hair-like, 3, dark reddish-purple to maroon. Petioles 8-10 mm long; lamina coriaceous, 20-80 × 15-38 mm, elliptic to oval to obovate, obtuse to acute to subacuminate, cuneately narrowed to base; margins coarsely serrate; surface glossy yellow-green (rarely dark green) above, paler below, serrations dark purple-black or maroon.

Inflorescences spicate; spikes oppositely arranged, solitary or openly branched up to 5 times, slender; branches 30-40 mm long. Flowers alternate, sessile, subtended by green or red-tinged, 0.8-1.2 mm long, less crenulate to serrate, deltoid to broadly ovate, acute bract and a smaller lateral pair. Male flower with one cylindrical anther 2.5-3.0 mm long; Female flower smaller, solitary or 2-3 together located between anther and stem stigma broad, sessile, ovary sessile. Fruit 2.5-3.0 mm long, broadly ovoid, fleshy white drupe.

## SIMILAR TAXA

*Ascarina lucida* var. *lanceolata*, which is endemic to Raoul Island in the Kermadec Islands group, is clearly related. *A. lucida* var. *lucida* differs from *A. lucida* var. *lanceolata* by the dark purple stems; by the 3 simple, conspicuous, reddish-purple filamentous stipules which lack fused bases; smaller, yellow-green leaves with purple-black or dark maroon pigmented serrations; more openly branched inflorescences with less congested flowers, and white drupes. *Ascarina lucida* var. *lucida* seems to be monoecious while *A. lucida* var. *lanceolata* appears to be gynodioecious, but this aspect needs further study.

## DISTRIBUTION

Endemic. North and South Islands. North Island: From Kaitia south to Wellington, mostly in the west, and only common in the Coromandel Ranges. South Island: North-West Nelson to Southland, abundant in North-West Nelson and Westland.

## HABITAT

Coastal to montane. A forest species which is most common in the wetter lowland and coastal forest of North-West Nelson and Westland. Elsewhere it is mostly uncommon, sporadic and often absent over large parts of its range.



Westhaven. Photographer: Simon Walls, Date taken: 01/03/2008, Licence: CC BY-NC.



Charleston, West Coast. Photographer: Melissa Hutchison, Date taken: 14/02/2014, Licence: CC BY-NC.

## THREATS

Not Threatened but very uncommon in the North Island

## GENUS

Ascarina

## FAMILY

Chloranthaceae

## AUTHORITY

*Ascarina lucida* Hook.f. var. *lucida*

## SYNONYMS

*Ascarina lucida* Hook.f.

## ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes

## ENDEMIC GENUS

No

## ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

## FLOWERING

August - December

## FRUITING

January - May

## PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

Very easy from fresh seed and cuttings. Rather cold sensitive and prefers moist soils, doing best in a sunny, sheltered situation.

## CULTIVATION

Occasionally sold by plant nurseries throughout New Zealand.

## ETYMOLOGY

**lucida**: Shining

## CHROMOSOME NUMBER

2n = 26

## PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2017 | Not Threatened

2012 | Not Threatened

2009 | Not Threatened

2004 | Not Threatened

[Jump to current conservation status](#)

## REGIONAL CONSERVATION STATUSES

Auckland: 2025 | Regionally Threatened – Regionally Endangered | Qualifiers: DPR, DPS, DPT, RR Help

The regional threat classification system leverages off the national assessments in the NZTCS, providing information relevant for the regional context. Auckland conservation status information is sourced from the "[Conservation status of vascular plant species in Tāmaki Makaurau / Auckland](#)" Simpkins E et al. (2025) report.

## REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

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

[de Lange, P.J. 1998. Two interesting plant records from Mt. Pirongia western Waikato. Auckland Botanical Society Journal, 53: 66-69](#)

[Martin, T.J. 2002. \*Ascarina lucida\* in the Auckland region. Auckland Botanical Society Journal, 57: 57-59](#)

## ATTRIBUTION

Description based on Allan (1961).

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## MORE INFORMATION

<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/ascarina-lucida-var-lucida/>

## PDF DATE

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