

Beilschmiedia tarairi

COMMON NAMES

taraire

BIOSTATUS

Native – Endemic taxon

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2023 | Not Threatened

[Jump to previous conservation statuses](#)

CATEGORY

Vascular

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Trees & Shrubs - Dicotyledons

SIMPLIFIED DESCRIPTION

Common canopy tree of northern North Island. Leaves large, leathery, oval, silvery underneath, margins curved. Twigs and young leaves with reddish down. Flowers inconspicuous. Fruit very large, dark purple, glossy, held upright, containing a single large elliptical seed which has a network of veins on the papery surface.

FLOWER COLOURS

Brown, Green

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Evergreen tree up to 22 m tall, with very broad canopy crown. Trunk to 1 m diam. Bark smooth, dark brown. Branches stout, spreading. Branchlets, young leaves, petioles and young inflorescences densely clad in reddish brown tomentum. Foliage closely alternate, erecto-patent, simple, leathery. Petioles (8-)10(-12) mm. Leaves (36-)50-72(-85) x (26-)34-48(-56) mm, wide-elliptic to wide-obovate, dark green and glabrous above, bullate, glaucous below, with stout veins covered in reddish brown tomentum, margins entire, apex rounded, retuse and mucronate. Inflorescence and erect, axillary panicle up to 100 mm long. Flowers sexually perfect, 3-5 mm diam., greenish, often partially clothed in dense reddish-brown tomentum, perianth cleft into 6, stamens 12. Fruit an erect, ellipsoid to ovoid drupe (28-)30(-35) x (14-)16(-18) mm, 1-seeded, pericarp fleshy, dark purple when ripe, covered in waxy glaucous bloom.

SIMILAR TAXA

A very distinct species whose broad, dark-green, bullate leaves with their distinctive glaucous undersides, and large, erect plum-like dark purple fruits serve to immediately distinguish it from all other indigenous trees and shrubs.

DISTRIBUTION

Endemic. Confined to the North Island where it most common north of Auckland and Thames. However it also occurs in scattered pockets in the west south of Port Waikato to the Kawhia Harbour, inland at Pukemokemoke (near Tauhei), and in the east it occurs very locally from the eastern end of Papatea Bay to East Cape.

HABITAT

Common canopy forming tree in lowland and lower montane forests north of Auckland. Often associated with kauri (*Agathis australis*), and pohutukawa (*Metrosideros excelsa*), and on basalt rocks and soils puriri (*Vitex lucens*).

GENUS

Beilschmiedia



Taraire leaves. Photographer: Department of Conservation, Licence: Public domain.



Colville, November. Photographer: John Smith-Dodsworth, Licence: CC BY-NC.

FAMILY

Lauraceae

AUTHORITY

Beilschmiedia tarairi (A.Cunn.) Benth. et Hook.f. ex Kirk

SYNONYMS

Laurus tarairi A.Cunn., *Nesodaphne tarairi* (A.Cunn.) Hook.f.

ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes

ENDEMIC GENUS

No

ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

FLOWERING

(September-) November (-December)

FRUITING

March - November

LIFE CYCLE AND DISPERSAL

Fleshy drupes are dispersed by frugivory (Thorsen et al., 2009).

PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

Easy from fresh seed. Better germination is achieved if the flesh surrounding the seed is cleaned off.

PLANT OF THE MONTH

This plant has been featured as a Plant of the Month – see [Trilepidea: NZPCN newsletter for June 2015](#) for the full story.

NVS CODE

BEITAR

CHROMOSOME NUMBER

2n=24

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 Not Threatened | Qualifiers: DPS, DPT 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, Wellington, Government Printer.

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* 2009 Vol. 11 No. 4 pp. 285-309

[Wilcox, M.D. 2001. Establishment of forest monitoring plots in Kirks Bush Papakura with special reference to *Taraire*\(*Beilschmiedia tarairi*\). Auckland Botanical Society Journal, 56: 76-79.](#)

Wright, A. E. 1984: *Beilschmiedia* Nees (Lauraceae) in New Zealand. *New Zealand Journal of Botany* 22: 109-125.

ATTRIBUTION

Fact sheet prepared for NZPCN by P.J. de Lange 12 February 2004. Description adapted from Allan (1961) and Wright (1984).

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MORE INFORMATION

<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/beilschmiedia-tarairi/>

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