

Ceodes brunoniana

COMMON NAMES

Parapara

BIOSTATUS

Native

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2023 | At Risk – Relict | Qualifiers: Inc, RC, TO

[Jump to previous conservation statuses](#)

CATEGORY

Vascular

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Trees & Shrubs - Dicotyledons

SIMPLIFIED DESCRIPTION

Small tree with large oval leaves and long extremely sticky fruit inhabiting northern offshore islands and coastal forests. Leaves 10-50cm long. Flowers white, in wide-angled clusters. Fruit green ripening to almost black, 2.5-4cm long, stick to birds.

FLOWER COLOURS

Green, White

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Spreading, usually multi-trunked and freely coppicing tree rarely exceeding 8 x 2 m in height. Main trunk up to 800 mm dbh, clad in firm, grey-brown to green-brown bark, usually with numerous dormant epicormic buds present. Branches at first erect, then spreading, rather brittle. Leaves opposite or in whorls. Petioles up to 40 mm, stout, fleshy, red-green to green; lamina 100-600 x 50-200 mm, green, yellow-green, or dark-green suffused with red (new growth often pink), glabrous, oblong to obovate-oblong, obtuse, margins entire, sinuate, sometimes lobed. Inflorescence a many-flowered, terminal, paniculate cyme with subtending, deciduous, leaf-like bracts. Pedicels finely covered in red-brown pubescence, stout, fleshy up to 20 mm long. Flowers usually monoecious, up to 10 mm long, calyx funnellform, 5-lobed, usually plicately folded, perianth greenish-white to white, pubescent to glabrescent. Stamens 6-8, anthers scarcely exerted. Fruit a 5-ribbed, hardened, narrowly elliptic to elliptic perianth 25-40 mm long; ribs exuding an extremely viscid exudates. Achene usually narrowly oblong to oblong-elliptic usually 5-angled, 16-20 mm long, dark red-brown to brown.

SIMILAR TAXA

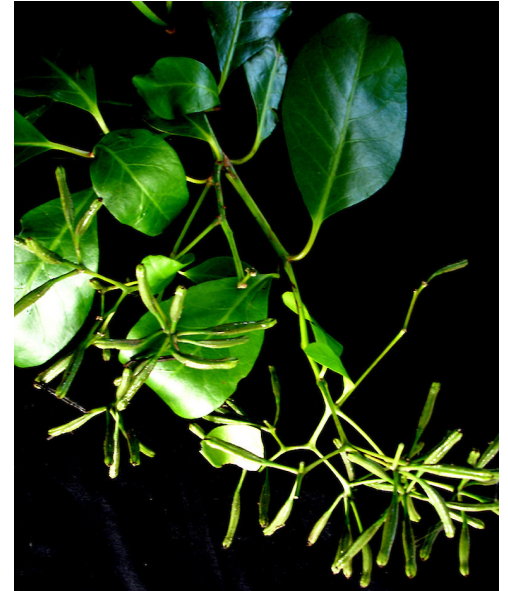
None

DISTRIBUTION

Indigenous. Kermadecs (Raoul), Three Kings, North Island (mainly offshore islands) but known on the mainland in scattered locations from the Whangape Harbour to Mangawhai. Historical records show it was around Auckland, on the Coromandel Peninsula and at East Cape. Also present in the wider Pacific (Hawai'i (Hawai'i, Lana'i, Maui, Moloka'i, O'ahu), Rarotonga, Lord Howe and Norfolk Islands).

HABITAT

Coastal forest. Now mainly found on rodent-free offshore islands where it can be a very important component of the understorey of mixed-broadleaf forest.



Pisonia brunoniana. Photographer: Peter J de Lange, Licence: CC BY-NC.



Puweto Valley, Aorangi Island. Photographer: Gillian M. Crowcroft, Licence: All rights reserved.

THREATS

Within the mainland part of its range, Parapara is virtually extinct. Its large leaves are especially palatable to browsing animals such as possums, goats and other feral livestock. However the main threat to accessible mainland populations are those individuals who decide to cut down trees because the sticky fruit trap small passerines. On rodent-free offshore islands it is common but has declined on those supporting these vermin. As more northerly islands are being made rodent-free parapara is making a spectacular come back.

GENUS

Ceodes

FAMILY

Nyctaginaceae

AUTHORITY

Ceodes brunoniana (Endl.) Skottsb.

SYNONYMS

Pisonia brunoniana Endl., Pisonia sinclairii Hook.f., Heimerliodendron brunonianum (Endl.) Skottsb.

TAXONOMIC NOTES

Recently Rossetto & Caraballo-Ortiz (2020) have recircumscribed Pisonia and in the process reinstated Ceodes J.R. Forst. et G.Forst., and Rockia Heimerl using molecular and morphological evidence and this view is accepted here.

ENDEMIC TAXON

No

ENDEMIC GENUS

No

ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

FLOWERING

August - December

FRUITING

August - July

PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

Easy from fresh seed, tolerant of a wide range of soils types and moisture levels. In suitable conditions seedlings often appear under planted trees. Rather cold sensitive and best grown in the warmer northern parts of NZ. It usually grows in sheltered coastal forest as an understorey plant it is quite tolerant of exposed sunny conditions, and can make an interesting specimen tree. The large leaves and quick growth have made it quite popular with people looking for a tropical effect. The pale cream flowers are pleasantly and strongly scented at night. The sticky fruits can be a problem, and sometimes small birds get caught in them. It is best to remove these if you want to avoid the occasional bird capture. A variegated form of unknown origin is also available.

EXTRA INFORMATION

Recently there has been a campaign initiated by members of various organisations to have parapara banned from sale and cultivation. This is on the grounds that the tree kills numerous birds and that it is not native to New Zealand. Scientific peer-reviewed studies and literature shows that bird captures do happen but hardly at the exaggerated levels promoted by its detractors. Parapara is also indigenous to New Zealand. The species is at risk throughout its natural world-wide range because of vandalism by people obsessed with its exaggerated bird-killer reputation. NZPCN would suggest that cultivation is a matter of informed decision. Nurseries stocking this plant should clearly label specimens with the warning that the fruits may catch small birds and insects. Gardeners who are concerned about catching birds can choose to cut spent flower heads before they develop into sticky seedheads.

PLANT OF THE MONTH

This plant has been featured as a Plant of the Month – see [Trilepidea: NZPCN newsletter for April 2006](#) for the full story.

NVS CODE

CEOBRU

CHROMOSOME NUMBER

2n = 136

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2017 | At Risk – Relict | Qualifiers: TO

2012 | At Risk – Relict | Qualifiers: TO

2009 | At Risk – Relict | Qualifiers: TO

2004 | Sparse

[Jump to current conservation status](#)

REGIONAL CONSERVATION STATUSES

Auckland: 2025 | Regionally At Risk – Regionally Relict | Qualifiers: DE, 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. Government Printer, Wellington

Rossetto, E.F.S.; Caraballo-Ortiz, M.A. 2020: Splitting the *Pisonia* birdcatcher trees: re-establishment of *Ceodes* and *Rockia* (Nyctaginaceae, Pisonieae). *Phytokeys* 152: 121–136.

ATTRIBUTION

Fact Sheet prepared for NZPCN by P.J. de Lange 1 September 2004. Description modified from Allan (1961) supplemented with observations made from herbarium and fresh specimens.

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MORE INFORMATION

<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/ceodes-brunoniana/>

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25 May 2026