

Cordyline banksii

COMMON NAME

tī ngahere, cabbage tree, tī rakau

SYNONYMS

Cordyline diffusa Colenso

FAMILY

Asparagaceae

AUTHORITY

Cordyline banksii Hook.f.

FLORA CATEGORY

Vascular – Native

ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes

ENDEMIC GENUS

No

ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Trees & Shrubs - Monocotyledons

NVS CODE

CORBAN

CHROMOSOME NUMBER

$2n = 38$

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2017 | Not Threatened

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2012 | Not Threatened

2009 | Not Threatened

2004 | Not Threatened

BRIEF DESCRIPTION

Palm-like small forest tree with multiple erect branches that have tufts of tough long narrow pointed leaves that taper into a long leaf stalk that then again widens to enclose the stem. Leaves 1-2m long by 4-8cm wide, drooping, central vein conspicuous. Fruit small, whiteish.

DISTRIBUTION

Endemic. Common throughout the North Island, In the South widespread through the northern half, extending in the west to about Haast with occasional as unsubstantiated reports of it from the coastal portion of Fiordland.

HABITAT

Common in coastal, lowland, and lower montane forests. Occasionally extending into subalpine habitats in the South Island. Often found in shrublands where it is sympatric with, and often hybridises with *Cordyline pumilio*. Tolerant of a wide range of situations.

WETLAND PLANT INDICATOR STATUS RATING

UPL: Obligate Upland

Rarely is a hydrophyte, almost always in uplands (non-wetlands).



In cultivation. Photographer: Jeremy R. Rolfe, Date taken: 09/11/2005, Licence: CC BY.



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DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Shrub or small tree up to 4 m tall. Stems (1-)4(- many) 100-150 mm diam., arising from ground level, subequal, sparingly branched. Leaves numerous, 100-200 x 4-8 cm, lanceolate (somewhat "paddle-shaped") broad about middle and drooping from there, narrowed above base into a long, narrow, channeled petiole. Midrib flat, prominent for entire leaf length. Inflorescence a panicle. Peduncle stout, fleshy, 30-40 x 200 mm. Panicle 1-2 m, often smaller, broadly pyramidal, openly branched to third order, lower bracts green and leaf-like. Ultimate racemes 150-300 mm, 200 mm or more in diam., bearing, numerous, well spaced sessile flowers in axes. Flowers sweetly perfumed, perianths 10 mm long, white; tepals fused near base, rather open. Stamens same length as tepals. Stigma shortly trifid. Fruit 4-5 mm diam., globose, white, bluish-white, or blue. Seeds 2 mm diam., black, glossy, 2 sides flat the other convex.

SIMILAR TAXA

Easily distinguished for other New Zealand Cordyline species by the smaller multi trunked shrub to small tree growth form, pale yellow-green, drooping leaved with have a prominent midrib, and by the very long, distinctive channeled petiole. The inflorescences though similar to *C. australis* are smaller, less branched and more compact, but the flowers are widely spaced.

FLOWERING

November - January

FLOWER COLOURS

White

FRUITING

February - April

LIFE CYCLE

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

PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

Easily grown from fresh seed. Can be grown from stem, shoot and trunk cuttings.

THREATS

Common and not threatened. Does not seem so susceptible to Sudden Decline as *C. australis* has proved to be.

ETYMOLOGY

cordyline: From the Greek kordyle 'club'

banksii: Named after Sir Joseph Banks, 1st Baronet, GCB, PRS (24 February 1743 - 19 June 1820) was an English naturalist, botanist and patron of the natural sciences.

WHERE TO BUY

Not as commonly cultivated as *C. australis* but still offered by many garden centres, particularly a purple-coloured leaf variant. Easily grown and great for steep poorly drained slopes or planted with other smaller shrub species such as *Muehlenbeckia astonii*.

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: 285-309

NZPCN FACT SHEET CITATION

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MORE INFORMATION

<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/cordyline-banksii/>