

Cordyline pumilio

COMMON NAME

Dwarf cabbage tree, tī koraha, tī rauriki, korokio

SYNONYMS

None

FAMILY

Asparagaceae

AUTHORITY

Cordyline pumilio Hook.f.

FLORA CATEGORY

Vascular – Native

ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes

ENDEMIC GENUS

No

ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Trees & Shrubs - Monocotyledons

NVS CODE

CORPUM

CHROMOSOME NUMBER

2n = 38

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2017 | Not Threatened

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2012 | Not Threatened

2009 | Not Threatened

2004 | Not Threatened

BRIEF DESCRIPTION

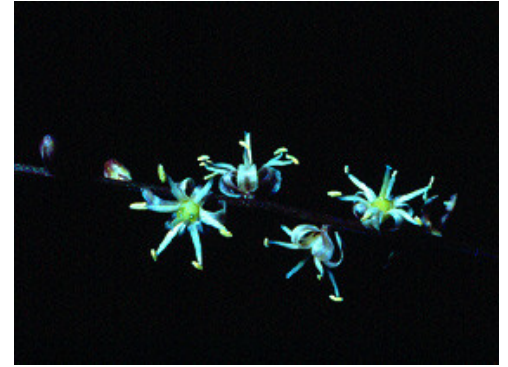
Small shrub consisting of a tuft of long very narrow leaves and often without a visible trunk. Easiest to identify by the long sparse sprays of small white or pink flowers developing into a blueish fruit. Leaves to 1m long x 1-2cm at widest, tapering into a grooved leaf stalk.

DISTRIBUTION

Endemic. North Island from Te Pahi (North Cape) to Kawhia Harbour in the west and Bay of Plenty in the East.

HABITAT

Coastal to montane. Often in gumland and other shrubland. Common in kauri (*Agathis australis*) forest, especially along ridgelines and around slip scars.



Cordyline pumilio. Photographer: John Smith-Dodsworth



Cordyline pumilio - cultivated. Photographer: Peter de Lange

FEATURES

Plant forming leafy tufts up to 1 m tall, trunk usually absent, rarely sparingly developed, occasionally reaching up to 2 m tall. Plants often flowering while short stem is leafy to ground; in older plants bare part of stem up to 0.1 × 0.15 m and usually sprawling, rarely stiffly erect. Leaves 0.30–0.60–1.00(-1.30) × 0.01–0.02 m, yellow-green to green (sometimes red-spotted) ± narrowed above base into channelled petiole; midrib prominent abaxially, at least proximally; margin slightly recurved. Inflorescence an openly, sparingly branched panicle up 0.1 × 0.8 m, axes slender branched to second order; bracts often small and inconspicuous; ultimate racemes 50–300 mm long, axis clearly visible between flowers. Peduncle to 100 × 3–4 mm. Flowers small, widely spaced; pedicels 3-5(-10) mm long, Perianth c.4–5 mm long, whitish, or pink externally; tepals narrow, recurved, 3-nerved. Stigma shortly trifid. Fruit c.4–5 mm diameter, globose, bluish or flecked with blue. Seeds c.2.0–2.5 mm. long, shining, two sides flat and one convex. Description adapted from Moore & Edgar (1970).

SIMILAR TAXA

Easily distinguished from all other *Cordyline* in New Zealand by its usually “stemless” growth habit (the stems are actually buried beneath the soil). More frequently confused with *Dianella* or *Libertia* from which it is easily distinguished by the, yellow-green, prominently ribbed leaves and much larger, lax paniculate inflorescences, and small, globular bluish to white flecked fruits.

FLOWERING

October - January

FLOWER COLOURS

Red/Pink, White

FRUITING

March - May

LIFE CYCLE

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

PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

Easily grown from fresh seed and stem cuttings. Does well in full sun in a well drained soil. It an excellent plant for a raised garden or for pot culture on for example a deck. A purple-leaved form of *Cordyline pumilio* is now very popular in cultivation.

ETYMOLOGY

cordyline: From the Greek *kordyle* ‘club’

pumilio: Small, dwarf

ATTRIBUTION

Fact sheet prepared for NZPCN by P.J. de Lange 14 February 2011. Description adapted from Moore & Edgar (1970).

REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

Moore, L.B.; Edgar, E. 1970: *Flora of New Zealand* Vol. II. 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 11: 285-309

NZPCN FACT SHEET CITATION

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MORE INFORMATION

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