

Dacrydium cupressinum

COMMON NAMES

rimu, red pine

BIOSTATUS

Native – Endemic taxon

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2023 | Not Threatened

[Jump to previous conservation statuses](#)

CATEGORY

Vascular

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Trees & Shrubs - Gymnosperms

FLOWER COLOURS

No flowers

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Dioecious conifer 35–(60) m tall. Adult trees with trunk bare of branches for $\frac{3}{4}$ of length. **Trunk** stout, 1.5–2 m diam., bark dark brown, falling off in large thick flakes. **Wood** dark red. **Branches** in juveniles numerous, slender, branchlets pendulous. **Adult branches** few, spreading, branchlets slender, pendulous. **Leaves** dark green, bronze-green, red-green or orange, imbricate, those of juveniles 4–7–(10) mm, 0.5–1 mm wide, keeled, acute, linear-subulate, subfalcate, decurrent; those of subadults ascending, incurved 4–6 mm, rhomboid; of adults similar but appressed, 2–3 mm., rigid, subacute, trigonous. **Male and female “cones”** first appear on subadults. **Male cones (strobili)** solitary or paired, terminal 5–10 mm., oblong. **Pollen** yellow. **Ovules** solitary, terminal on up-curved branchlets. **Receptacle** a fleshy red or deep-orange cup 1–2 mm long. **Seed** oblong or elliptic-oblong, compressed in section, 3–3.8–(4) mm long, semi-glossy, dark-brown.

SIMILAR TAXA

A very distinctive species which could not be confused with any other indigenous conifer. The very young juveniles have a superficial similarity to seedlings of silver pine (*Manoao colensoi*) but differ by their much finer, more numerous, dull rather than glossy red-green leaves.

DISTRIBUTION

Endemic. New Zealand: North Island (from North Cape (Otu) south), South Island and Stewart Island/Rakiura. Uncommon in large parts of the eastern South Island. Facultatively extinct on Banks Peninsula, where one natural tree is all that remains.

HABITAT

Lowland to montane forest—occasionally ascending to subalpine scrub.

THREATS

Not Threatened, although as a forest-type it has been greatly reduced through widespread logging. Very few intact examples of rimu-dominated forest remain in the North Island.

GENUS

Dacrydium



Female cones. Photographer: Department of Conservation, Licence: Public domain.



Fertilised cones. Photographer: Department of Conservation, Licence: Public domain.

FAMILY

Podocarpaceae

AUTHORITY

Dacrydium cupressinum Lamb.

SYNONYMS

Thalamia cupressina Spreng

TAXONOMIC NOTES

Rimu is the type of the genus *Dacrydium*.

ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes

ENDEMIC GENUS

No

ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

FLOWERING

December–March

FRUITING

Fruits take a year or more to mature and co-occur with young female cones, they are most frequently seen between February and May.

LIFE CYCLE AND DISPERSAL

Arillate seeds are dispersed by frugivory (Thorsen et al., 2009).

PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

Easily grown from fresh seed. Can be grown from hard-wood cuttings but rather slow to strike.

WETLAND PLANT INDICATOR STATUS RATING

FACU: Facultative Upland

Occasionally is a hydrophyte but usually occurs in uplands (non-wetlands).

CULTURAL USE/IMPORTANCE

The first indigenous beer was brewed using the young tips of rimu (as spruce beer) by Captain Cook at Dusky Sound in 1773 (Kirk 1889).

CULTIVATION

Commonly cultivated and frequently sold by most commercial nurseries and outlets. A very popular garden tree.

PLANT OF THE MONTH

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

ETYMOLOGY

dacrydium: Tear drop

cupressinum: Cypress

NVS CODE

DACCUP

CHROMOSOME NUMBER

2n = 20

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.

Otago: 2025 | Regionally Not Threatened Help

The regional threat classification system leverages off the national assessments in the NZTCS, providing information relevant for the regional context. Otago conservation status information is sourced from the "[Conservation Status of Indigenous Vascular Plants in Otago, 2025](#)" Jarvie S et al. (2025) report.

REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

Allan HH. 1961. Flora of New Zealand, Volume I. Indigenous Tracheophyta: Psilopsida, Lycopsidea, Filicopsida, Gymnospermae, Dicotyledones. Government Printer, Wellington, NZ. 1085 p.

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ATTRIBUTION

Fact sheet prepared for NZPCN by P.J. de Lange 3 February 2006. Description adapted from Allan (1961), Webb & Simpson (2001), fresh material and herbarium specimens.

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<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/dacrydium-cupressinum/> (Date website was queried)

MORE INFORMATION

<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/dacrydium-cupressinum/>

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