

# Discaria toumatou

## COMMON NAMES

matagouri, tūmatakuru

## BIOSTATUS

Native – Endemic taxon

## CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2023 | Not Threatened | Qualifiers: DPT

[Jump to previous conservation statuses](#)

## CATEGORY

Vascular

## STRUCTURAL CLASS

Trees & Shrubs - Dicotyledons

## SIMPLIFIED DESCRIPTION

Spiky grey shrub with many zig-zagging long flexible twigs bearing long (up to 5cm long) green spines interspersed with small oval dark green leaves. Bark rough, broken into squares. Leaves 10–20mm long. Flowers small, white, inconspicuous. Fruit a dry, 3 sided capsule.

## FLOWER COLOURS

White

## DISTRIBUTION

Endemic. North Island (from near Waiuku south to the southern Wairarapa and Wellington coastline; very uncommon), South Island (mainly east of the main divide, appearing to avoid areas of high rainfall).

## THREATS

Although abundant and probably stable in much of its South Island range, *Discaria toumatou* has become very uncommon and is under threat throughout the North Island, where it is now known from very few sites and viable populations. Reasons for the decline are not specified but loss of habitat is likely to be a major factor.

## GENUS

Discaria

## FAMILY

Rhamnaceae

## AUTHORITY

*Discaria toumatou* Raoul

## SYNONYMS

None

## ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes

## ENDEMIC GENUS

No

## ENDEMIC FAMILY

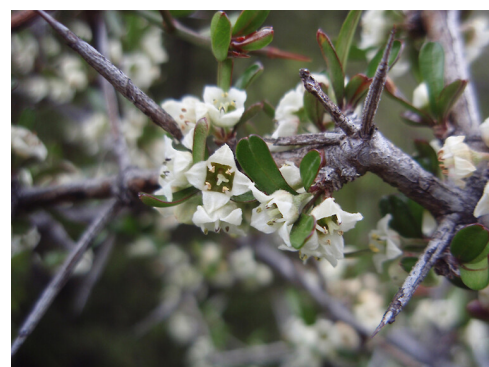
No

## LIFE CYCLE AND DISPERSAL

Seeds are dispersed by ballistic projection and water (Thorsen et al., 2009).



In cultivation ex Castle Hill. Photographer: Jeremy R. Rolfe, Date taken: 04/10/2007, Licence: CC BY.



Cass, Canterbury. Photographer: Jane Gosden, Date taken: 06/12/2009, Licence: CC BY-NC-SA.

## PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

Easy from seed. Can be grown from cuttings but these can be slow to strike. Rather variable, and some North Island sand dune forms are entirely prostrate, forming trailing shrubs. An excellent hedge plant, with the added bonus that this species fixes atmospheric nitrogen, making it available for other plants.

## WETLAND PLANT INDICATOR STATUS RATING

UPL: Obligate Upland

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

## CULTIVATION

Occasionally available from specialist native plant nurseries.

## ETYMOLOGY

**discaria**: Disc bearing

**toumatou**: Derived from the Maori name tumamatakuru.

## NVS CODE

DISTOU

## CHROMOSOME NUMBER

2n = 22

## PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2017 | At Risk – Declining

2012 | Not Threatened

2009 | Not Threatened

2004 | Not Threatened

[Jump to current conservation status](#)

## REGIONAL CONSERVATION STATUSES

Auckland: 2025 | Regionally Extirpated 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

Chrystall L. 1976. Further record of matagouri in the North Island. *Wellington Botanical Society Bulletin* 39: 47.

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Moorfield JC. 2005. Te Aka : Māori-English, English-Māori dictionary and index. Longman/Pearson Education, Auckland, NZ. 357 p.

Thorsen MJ, Dickinson KJM, Seddon PJ. 2009. Seed dispersal systems in the New Zealand flora. *Perspectives in Plant Ecology, Evolution and Systematics* 11: 285–309. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ppees.2009.06.001>.

## MORE INFORMATION

<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/discaria-toumatou/>

## PDF DATE

27 May 2026