

# Discaria toumatou

## COMMON NAME

matagouri, tūmatakuru

## SYNONYMS

None

## FAMILY

Rhamnaceae

## AUTHORITY

Discaria toumatou Raoul

## FLORA CATEGORY

Vascular – Native

## ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes

## ENDEMIC GENUS

No

## ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

## STRUCTURAL CLASS

Trees & Shrubs - Dicotyledons

## NVS CODE

DISTOU

## CHROMOSOME NUMBER

2n = 22

## CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2017 | At Risk – Declining

## PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2012 | Not Threatened

2009 | Not Threatened

2004 | Not Threatened

## BRIEF 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.

## 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).

## WETLAND PLANT INDICATOR STATUS RATING

UPL: Obligate Upland

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

## FLOWER COLOURS

White



Danseys pass, November. Photographer: John Smith-Dodsworth, Licence: CC BY-NC.



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

## LIFE CYCLE

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

## 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.

## 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.

## ETYMOLOGY

**discaria:** Disc bearing

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

## WHERE TO BUY

Occasionally available from specialist native plant nurseries.

## 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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- Elder NL. 1967. Matagouri in the North Island – Part 2. *Wellington Botanical Society Bulletin* 34: 19–20.
- 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/>