

Elaeocarpus hookerianus

COMMON NAME

Pokaka

SYNONYMS

None

FAMILY

Elaeocarpaceae

AUTHORITY

Elaeocarpus hookerianus Raoul

FLORA CATEGORY

Vascular – Native

ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes

ENDEMIC GENUS

No

ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Dicotyledonous Trees & Shrubs

NVS CODE

ELAHOO

CHROMOSOME NUMBER

2n = 30

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2012 | Not Threatened

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2009 | Not Threatened

2004 | Not Threatened

BRIEF DESCRIPTION

Small tree with distinct small narrow glossy olive-green and brown wavy leaves to 5cm long on zig zagging interlacing branches on juvenile plants that then develop much larger adult leaves 3-11cm long by 1-3cm wide on straight erect twigs. Flowers white, lacy, drooping, in small sprays. Fruit dark purple, oval.

DISTRIBUTION

Endemic. North, South and Stewart Islands - uncommon from Auckland north.

HABITAT

Common tree of lowland to montane forests.

SIMILAR TAXA

The juvenile and sub adult form of this species is well marked, and could only be confused with the unrelated *Pittosporum turneri*. It can be distinguished from that by the branches being circular rather than hexagonal, and by the more diverse array of leaf shapes, and usually by the greater preponderance of linear-lanceolate, deeply lobed or serrated leaves. In its adult stage it is somewhat similar to hinau but has much smaller, uniformly darker coloured leaves, and smaller flowers and fruits.

FLOWERING

October - January



Pinehaven, Upper Hutt. Dec 2004.

Photographer: Jeremy Rolfe



Mataroa, Taihape, April. Photographer: John Smith-Dodsworth

FLOWER COLOURS

White

FRUITING

November - March (- June)

LIFE CYCLE

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

PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

Easy from fresh fruit - though can be slow to germinate. Moderately easy in most soils, light and moisture regimes. Although it does best in a deep, moist, well mulched soil., it is rather hardy and once established is remarkably drought tolerant. Occasionally hybridises with hinau.

ETYMOLOGY

elaecarpus: Olive-seed

hookerianus: Named after Sir Joseph Dalton Hooker (born 1817) - a world famous botanist who travelled on the Antarctic expedition of 1839 under the command of Sir James Ross and wrote "Handbook of New Zealand Flora" published in 1864-67 describing many specimens sent to Kew by collectors. He died in 1911 and has a memorial stone at Westminster Abbey London.

WHERE TO BUY

As with hinau, pokaka is a beautifully tree which should be more widely grown. The interlacing, divaricating juvenile to sub adult growth form is quite popular with modern landscape gardeners, as such pokaka is more often sold by commercial nurseries than hinau.

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

MORE INFORMATION

<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/elaecarpus-hookerianus/>