Freycinetia banksii

COMMON NAME
Kiekie

SYNONYMS
Freycinetia baueriana subsp. banksii (A.Cunn.) B.C.Stone

FAMILY
Pandanaceae

AUTHORITY
Freycinetia banksii A.Cunn.

FLORA CATEGORY
Vascular – Native

ENDEMIC TAXON
Yes

ENDEMIC GENUS
No

ENDEMIC FAMILY
No

STRUCTURAL CLASS
Lianes - Monocots

NVS CODE
FREBAN

CHROMOSOME NUMBER
2n = 62

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS
2012 | Not Threatened

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES
2009 | Not Threatened
2004 | Not Threatened

DISTRIBUTION
Endemic. New Zealand: North and South Islands to about the Clarence river in the east and Fiordland in the west. More common in the wetter parts of the South Island.

HABITAT
Coastal to montane forest, usually in wet sites although once established it can tolerate very dry conditions. Often coastal in karst country where it may form huge tangles that make access extremely difficult.
FEATURES
Densely branched, somewhat brittle, woody, climber producing numerous, weakly ascending to ascending dense
cane-like stems from which roots freely emerge. Stems up to 40 mm diameter, deeply marked with scars of old
leaves, usually branched in upper third, often somewhat interlacing such that the stems form dense tangles. Leaves
densely tufted toward stem ends, spirally arranged; lamina 1.5-2 x 0.15-0.25 m; sheathing bases pale, otherwise
dark green to green, usually yellow spotted, blemished or striped, strongly pleated, long attenuate, triangular in
transverse section, margins and midrib distinctly though finely scabrid to spinulose. Inflorescences of 1-8 spadices,
each simple and solitary in axil of 2-4 foliaceous bracts at stem apex; bracts thick, succulent towards base, white to
purple, edible (sweet tasting). Peduncle 10-40 mm, whitish, stout, glabrous; spadix 70-80 x 15-20 mm, pale
yellow, cream, off white, cylindrical to slightly flattened, the axis hidden by tightly packed flowers such that
individual flowers not easily determined. Male of several stamens each with a long filament, ovate anther and
producing copious, confluent pollen, ovary rudimentary. Female with 6-12 purplish staminodes at base of flattened,
vertically elongated ovary, 2-4 x 1 mm x 2 mm tall, long sides grooved between staminodes; stigmas 6-12, sessile,
arranged around a long groove; locule narrow, placentae forming ridged around it. Fruits to 150 x 30 mm, brownish
when ripe, sweet tasting (like caramel), borne on stiff woody peduncles. Individual fruits (phalanges) 8 x 2 x 10 mm,
compressed laterally, thin-walled proximally, broadest 1/3 from base and almost woody towards apex. Seed 1 mm
long, narrow, on a long, slender funicle.

SIMILAR TAXA
None. Stone (1973) made a combination at subspecies rank for F. banksii within the Norfolk Island endemic F.
baueriana. Subsequent research, especially by Huyhn (1993), and added to and summarised by de Lange et al.
(2005) shows quite clearly why both these taxa should be maintained at species rank. They differ significantly with
respect to their phyllotaxis, leaf width, margin (entire in F. baueriana, scabrid in F. banksii), vein tessellation
(abundant in F. baueriana, absent in F. banksii) colour (glaucous in F. baueriana, dark green with yellow flecks/spots
in F. banksii), degree of pleating (absent in F. baueriana, present in F. banksii), and the floral bract colour (white to
purplish in F. banksii, salmon pink to orange in F. baueriana) - as well as the over all growth habit.

FLOWERING
August - November

FLOWER COLOURS
Green, White

FRUITING
January - May

LIFE CYCLE
Viscid phalanges are dispersed by frugivory and attachment (Thorsen et al., 2009).

PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE
Easy from fresh seed and rooted pieces but tends to be quite to slow to establish. An attractive vine with beautiful
edible flowers and fruits. It deserves to be more widely grown.

THREATS
Not Threatened - however, over large parts of its range it is experiencing reproductive failure due to rats which eat
the flowers and fruits. Possums also eat the flowers and fruits but it has been shown that they help disperse the
seeds. Freycinetia is one of the few New Zealand species with flowers said to be suited to bat pollination

ETYMOLOGY
freycinetia: Named by Charles Gaudichaud-Beaupré (1789-1854) after Admiral Louis de Freycinet (1779-1842) who
was a 19th century French navigator and explorer. Freycinet was the commander of the circumglobal expedition on
which Charles Gaudichaud-Beaupré (1789-1854) was the botanist and was the first to collect and describe the
genus Freycinetia.

banksii: Named after Sir Joseph Banks, 1st Baronet, GCB, PRS (24 February 1743 - 19 June 1820) was an English
naturalist, botanist and patron of the natural sciences.

CULTURAL USE/IMPORTANCE
The succulent bracts, flowers and sweet tasting fruits were eaten by Maori. The leaves were also used to weave
coarse mats and vessels for temporarily holding food.