

Hoheria angustifolia

COMMON NAMES

narrow-leaved houhere

BIOSTATUS

Native – Endemic taxon

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2023 | Not Threatened

[Jump to previous conservation statuses](#)

CATEGORY

Vascular

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Trees & Shrubs - Dicotyledons

SIMPLIFIED DESCRIPTION

Tall soft-wooded grey-trunked tree bearing masses of narrow sharply-toothed leaves and small clusters of white flowers that develop into dry papery winged fruits. Leaves 20-48mm long by 5-10mm wide (juvenile leaves much shorter and rounder). Flowers in groups of 1-8, on stalks 10-12mm long.

FLOWER COLOURS

White

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Slender heteroblastic tree up to 18 m tall. Mature branches and branchlets ± glabrous; young branches and branchlets finely and densely covered in stellate-pubescence. Juvenile and sub-adults filiramate-divaricate, branchlets slender, pliant, ± interlacing. Leaves distant, fascicled, on very slender petioles, 1.0-2.3 mm long; lamina (2.0-)4.0(-8.4) × 4.0-7.5 mm, grey-green to dark green, broad-obovate to suborbicular, cuneately narrowed to base, dentate along upper margin. Adult leaves, less widely spaced, fascicled. petioles 4.8-5.3 mm long; lamina (including teeth) 20-48 × 5-10 mm; narrow, obovate, oblanceolate, oblong, lanceolate, apex obtuse to acute; margins coarsely spinulose dentate-serrate; teeth up to 4 mm long. The different leaf-forms may all occur on the same plant, often as reversion shoots on damaged mature trees. Flowers solitary or in 2-8-flowered cymose fascicles on very slender stellate-pubescent pedicels 10-12 mm long. Calyx densely pubescent, campanulate, 3.0-4.2 mm long, (3-)5-fid; teeth broad-triangular. Petals (5-)7(-9) mm long, white, obliquely narrow-oblong, notched. Stigma capitate. Anthers reniform. Carpels and styles 5. Mericarp semicircular, winged, main body 2.5-3.5 mm long, pale brown; wing 3.0-6.0 mm long, light-orange yellow, densely covered with stellate hairs near base. Description adapted from Allan (1961) and Webb & Simpson (2011).



Seeds and leaves; in cultivation. Photographer: Jesse Bythell, Date taken: 02/05/2020, Licence: CC BY-NC.



Inner bark. Otago Peninsula. Photographer: John Barkla, Licence: CC BY.

SIMILAR TAXA

Easily distinguished from all other *Hoheria* species by the heteroblastic growth habit in which the filiramulate-divaricating juvenile form is long persistent, being usually seen as reversion shoots on mature trees. The mature leaves of *Hoheria angustifolia* are also much narrowed and more deeply toothed than any other species. However, where the ranges of *Hoheria angustifolia* and *H. sexstylosa* overlap, hybrids between both species are common (these have even been formally named as *H. populnea* var. *lanceolata* - a "variety" many New Zealand botanists seem to think equates with *H. sexstylosa*, one of its parents!). Another expression of this hybrid found occasionally in the Tararua Ranges, Eastern Wairarapa, South Wellington coastline and in parts of the Marlborough Sounds has even been referred to as a 'new species' known as *Hoheria* "Tararua". These hybrids can be recognised by their shorter, broader canopy and variable leaf dimensions which are intermediate between both parents. Unfortunately introgressive hybrid swarms are frequent, and at times the hybrid dominates where one or more parents have been eliminated. Detailed research into these hybrid swarms using modern molecular methods is sorely needed to determine the extent of gene-flow as well as to characterise the nature of this hybridism.

DISTRIBUTION

Endemic. New Zealand: North and South Islands - mostly easterly from the Wairoa River in Northland south to Southland. In the North Island scarce north of the Hawke's Bay, absent from Taranaki, Bay of Plenty and Auckland areas and from most of the Waikatō. In the South Island absent from Westland and Fiordland.

HABITAT

A common, mostly lowland forest species frequenting alluvial forest, where it may at times be dominant. *Hoheria angustifolia* is often an important host for white mistletoe/taapia/pirita (*Tupeia antarctica*).

THREATS

Not Threatened - though the northern North Island populations are small and few are on protected land

GENUS

Hoheria

FAMILY

Malvaceae

AUTHORITY

Hoheria angustifolia Raoul

SYNONYMS

Hoheria populnea var. *angustifolia* (Raoul) Hook.f.

ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes

ENDEMIC GENUS

Yes

ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

FLOWERING

December - February

FRUITING

February - April

LIFE CYCLE AND DISPERSAL

Winged mericarps are dispersed by wind (Thorsen et al., 2009).

PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

Easy from fresh seed. Very fast growing and the diversity of foliage types exhibited by juvenile and adults can be very attractive. Due to its large size it is best for a big garden

WETLAND PLANT INDICATOR STATUS RATING

FACU: Facultative Upland

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

CULTIVATION

Occasionally sold by garden centres and commonly available from specialist native plant nurseries.

ETYMOLOGY

hoheria: Latin version of the Maori name houhere which refers to *H. populnea* and *H. glabrata*.

angustifolia: From the Latin *angustus* 'narrow, constricted' and *folius* 'leaf', meaning narrow-leaved

NVS CODE

HOHANG

CHROMOSOME NUMBER

2n = 42

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2017 | Not Threatened

2012 | Not Threatened

2009 | Not Threatened

2004 | Not Threatened

[Jump to current conservation status](#)

REGIONAL CONSERVATION STATUSES

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, H.H. 1961: Flora of New Zealand. Vol. I, Wellington, Government Printer.

Webb, C.J.; Simpson, M.J.A. 2001: Seeds of New Zealand Gymnosperms and Dicotyledons. Christchurch, Manuka Press.

Moorfield, J. C. (2005). Te aka : Maori-English, English-Maori dictionary and index. Pearson Longman: Auckland, N.Z.

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

ATTRIBUTION

Fact Sheet Prepared for NZPCN by P.J. de Lange (3 April 2011). Description adapted from Allan (1961) and Webb & Simpson (2011).

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MORE INFORMATION

<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/hoheria-angustifolia/>

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