

Hoheria equitum

COMMON NAME

Poor Knights houhere

SYNONYMS

None (first described in 2000)

FAMILY

Malvaceae

AUTHORITY

Hoheria equitum Heads

FLORA CATEGORY

Vascular – Native

ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes

ENDEMIC GENUS

Yes

ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Trees & Shrubs - Dicotyledons

NVS CODE

HOHEQU

CHROMOSOME NUMBER

2n = 42

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2017 | At Risk – Naturally Uncommon | Qualifiers: RR

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2012 | At Risk – Naturally Uncommon | Qualifiers: RR

2009 | At Risk – Naturally Uncommon | Qualifiers: IE

2004 | Range Restricted

BRIEF DESCRIPTION

Small soft-wooded tree producing white flowers that develop into a dry winged seed inhabiting the Poor Knights Islands. Leaves thin, oval, 35-150mm long by 15-95mm wide, with small teeth along margin, on 10-30mm long stalks. Flowers white, in groups of 1-15, on stalks 10-20mm long.

DISTRIBUTION

Endemic. Poor Knights and Hen and Chicken Islands only

HABITAT

Coastal forest on offshore islands. Sometimes in petrel scrub or low windshorn forest along ridge lines.



Close up of flowers, Ex. Cult. Tawhiti Rahi, Poor Knights Islands. Photographer: Gillian M. Crowcroft, Date taken: 01/03/1999, Licence: All rights reserved.



Hoheria equitum showing growth and flower habit. Photographer: Lisa Forester, Licence: CC BY-SA.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Evergreen tree to 8 m tall, more or less glabrous except the young shoots and flower buds which are clad in stellate hairs, bark fibrous, tough, branches slender, sucker shoots frequent. Juvenile foliage similar to adult. Leaves yellow-green, alternate, 35-150 × 15-95 mm, elliptic to broadly elliptic apex obtuse to subacuminate, acuminate, where present, often obtuse; young leaves with stellate hairs on undersides, soon glabrescent; margins recurved, entire or distantly and rather obscurely serrate with blunt teeth up to 1-2 mm long, petiole 10-30 mm long, stipules linear, 3.5 × 0.5 mm. Flowers in 1-15-flowered axillary fascicles, these solitary on articulated pedicels 10-20 mm long, bearing few hairs. Flowers hermaphrodite, regular, 10-23 mm across. Epicalyx absent. Calyx rather deeply toothed, lobes 5, 2 × 2 mm, clad in sparse stellate hairs when young, without adaxial glands. Petals 5, white, obtuse, asymmetrical with a notch on one side of the apex, slightly clawed at base. Staminal column adnate to corolla, bearing c.20 stamens in 5 bundles, sparse, stiff hairs present abaxially at base of staminal tube, anthers dark red before dehiscence, fading to pale yellow. Ovary superior, 5-celled, 1.8 × 1.5 mm, with a crown of short hairs at the apex, Ovules pendulous, 1 in each cell. Style branches 5, stigma 0.5 mm wide, capitate or obliquely capitate, not decurrent. Fruit a schizocarp, separating from a central axis into 5, 1-seeded, more or less indehiscent winged Mericarps. Mericarps 4.0-4.8 mm long, semicircular, initially bright green maturing greyish, broader at base, rounded to angular otherwise, wings arising from upper ½ of dorsal surface, ribbed, margins irregularly toothed to somewhat smooth.

SIMILAR TAXA

Hoheria populnea A.Cunn., from which *H. equitum* differs by its uniformly bright green to dark green, usually larger, entire or finely serrated or crenate margined leaves; smaller flowers which are usually obscured amongst the foliage. *H. equitum* is an island endemic which is sympatric in the southern part of its range with *H. populnea* on the Hen & Chicken Islands. DNA sequences (MatK and ITS) confirm that it is distinct from all other *Hoheria* species.

FLOWERING

January - March

FLOWER COLOURS

Red/Pink, White

FRUITING

March - May

LIFE CYCLE

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

PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

Easy from fresh seed - indeed naturalises in gardens. Can be grown from semi-hardwood cuttings but these are difficult to strike. A short-lived, very fast growing tree, ideal in a dry, open, exposed spot. Likes full sun, reasonably tolerant of frost once established

THREATS

Abundant within its narrow geographic range

ETYMOLOGY

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

WHERE TO BUY

Occasionally available from specialist native plant nurseries

ATTRIBUTION

Description (except for fruits) adapted from Heads (2000)

REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

Heads, M. 2000: A new species of *Hoheria* (Malvaceae) from the Poor Knights Islands and Hen and Chickens Islands, New Zealand. *New Zealand Journal of Botany*, 38: 373-377

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

NZPCN FACT SHEET CITATION

Please cite as: de Lange, P.J. (Year at time of access): *Hoheria equitum* Fact Sheet (content continuously updated). New Zealand Plant Conservation Network. <https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/hoheria-equitum/> (Date website was queried)

MORE INFORMATION

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