**Kunzea ericoides**

**COMMON NAME**
kānuka

**SYNONYMS**
Leptospermum ericoides A.Rich.

**FAMILY**
Myrtaceae

**AUTHORITY**

**FLORA CATEGORY**
Vascular – Native

**ENDEMIC TAXON**
Yes

**ENDEMIC GENUS**
No

**ENDEMIC FAMILY**
No

**STRUCTURAL CLASS**
Trees & Shrubs - Dicotyledons

**NVS CODE**
KUNEVE

**CHROMOSOME NUMBER**
2n = 22

**CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS**
2018 | Threatened – Nationally Vulnerable

**PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES**
2012 | Not Threatened
2009 | Not Threatened
2004 | Not Threatened

**BRIEF DESCRIPTION**
Common tree of the northern South Island only. Bark flaky. Branches often pendent at ends, bearing masses of needle-like bright green leaves and clusters of small white flowers. Branchlets appearing hairless (sparsely covered in very small erect hairs (20x magnification)). Leaves to 25 mm long, soft to grasp. Flowers borne in ‘corymbiform’ clusters, white with a red centre. Fruit a small dry capsule 1.9-3.4 × 1.8–3.9 mm.

**DISTRIBUTION**
Endemic. New Zealand: Northern South Island only - north of the Buller and Wairau Rivers. Most common in North West Nelson.

**HABITAT**
Coastal to lowland shrubland, regenerating forest and forest margins, also present in montane forest, ultramafic shrubland and very occasionally present in subalpine shrubland.
FEATURES
Trees up to 18 m. Trunk 1–4, 0.10–0.85 m d.b.h. Early bark brown to grey-brown, ± elongate, usually firmly attached, margins elongate sinuous, ± entire with scarcely any flaking; old bark similar. Branches slender, initially ascending soon spreading, apices often pendulous. Branchlets numerous, slender, glabrescent; indumentum sparse, deciduous, hairs divergent 0.02–0.05 mm long; leaves of branchlets densely crowded along stems. Leaves sessile, ± glabrous, except for the margins; lamina 4.0–25.0 × 0.5–1.8 mm, green to yellow-green, linear, linear-lanceolate, to narrowly lanceolate, straight or with upper ¼ weakly recurved, apex acute, sometimes cuspidate, base attenuate; lamina margins initially finely sericeous, glabrate or glabrous; hairs forming a fine, discontinuous band falling just short of lamina apex. Inflorescence a compact corymbiform to shortly elongate 3–15-flowered botryum up 60 mm long. Pherophylls foliose ± persistent, 1 per flower; lamina 3.0–7.8 × 0.9–1.4 mm, elliptic, lanceolate to narrowly lanceolate, apex acute, base attenuate; Pedicels 1.6–3.8 mm long at anthesis, usually glabrous. Flower buds pyriform to narrowly obconic, apex of mature buds weakly domed to flat, calyx lobes distant. Flowers 4.1–8.3 mm diam. Hypanthium 1.4–3.2 × 1.9–4.1 mm; sharply obconic, apex terminating in 5 persistent suberect to spreading calyx lobes; hypanthium glabrous (very rarely with basal ¼ finely , sparsely covered in minute hairs). Calyx lobes 5, suberect to spreading, 0.4–1.0 × 0.4–1.0 mm, orbicular, obtuse to broadly deltoid, red-green, pink or crimson, margins glabrous or finely ciliate. Receptacle green or pink at anthesis, darkening to crimson or dark magenta after fertilisation. Petals 5, 1.4–2.6 × 1.5–2.0 mm, white, orbicular, suborbicular to narrowly ovate, spreading, apex rounded, entire or very finely denticulate, oil glands usually not evident when fresh, ± colourless. Stamens 10–34 in 1–2 weakly defined whors, filaments white. Anthers dorsifixed, 0.35–0.48 × 0.16–0.24 mm, broadly ellipsoid. Pollen white. Anther connective gland prominent, pink or pinkish-orange when fresh, drying red to orange, ± spheroidal ± coarsely papillate. Ovary 4–5 locular, each with 16–24 ovules in two rows on each placental lobe. Style 1.5–2.2 mm long at anthesis; stigma capitate, about 1¼× the style diam., flat, cream or white, flushing pink after anthesis, surface very finely granular-papillate. Fruits rarely persistent, 1.9–3.4 × 1.8–3.9 mm, glabrous, dark green to reddish-green, maturing brown to grey-brown to grey-black, cupular, barrel-shaped, shortly cylinrical to hemispherical, calyx valves erect with the apices incurved, split concealed by dried, erect, free portion of hypanthium. Seeds 1.00–1.05 × 0.32–0.50 mm, semi-glossy, orange-brown to dark brown, obovold, oblong, oblong-ellipsoid, or cylinrical and ± curved, surface coarsely reticulate.

SIMILAR TAXA
Easily distinguished from all other members of the Kunzea ericoides complex by the glabrescent to glabrous branchlets. The bright green, finely, linear-lanceolate leaves and small flowers with very low stamen numbers also help to identify this variety.

FLOWERING
October-February

FLOWER COLOURS
White

FRUITING
November-March

LIFE CYCLE
Seeds are dispersed by wind and possibly water (Thorsen et al., 2009).

PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE
Very easy from fresh seed. Seed must be sown fresh, even if left for a few weeks before sowing viability can drop, especially if seed is allowed to dry out. Very difficult from cuttings, though soft wood water shoots give the best results.

THREATS
Not threatened, though some stands are at risk from clearance for farmland or through felling for firewood.

ETYMOLOGY
kunzea: Named after Gustav Kunze (4 October 1793, Leipzig -30 April 1851), 19th century German botanist from Leipzig who was a German professor of zoology, an entomologist with an interest mainly in ferns and orchids ericoides: Like a heath
WHERE TO BUY
Uncommon in cultivation. It does not seem to be commercially available. Most plants sold as *K. ericoides* are another, very common, allied species *Kunzea robusta*.

ATTRIBUTION

REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

NZPCN FACT SHEET CITATION
Please cite as: de Lange, P.J. (Year at time of access): Kunzea ericoides Fact Sheet (content continuously updated). New Zealand Plant Conservation Network. https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/kunzea-ericoides/ (Date website was queried)

MORE INFORMATION