Leucopogon xerampelinus

COMMON NAME
Surville Cliffs mingimingi

SYNONYMS
None (first described in 2003)

FAMILY
Ericaceae

AUTHORITY
Leucopogon xerampelinus de Lange, Heenan et M.I. Dawson

FLORA CATEGORY
Vascular – Native

ENDEMIC TAXON
Yes

ENDEMIC GENUS
No

ENDEMIC FAMILY
No

STRUCTURAL CLASS
Dicotyledonous Trees & Shrubs

CHROMOSOME NUMBER
2n = 22

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS
2012 | At Risk – Naturally Uncommon | Qualifiers: OL

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES
2009 | At Risk – Naturally Uncommon | Qualifiers: CD, ST, OL
2004 | Range Restricted

BRIEF DESCRIPTION
Low growing reddish prickly shrub bearing hard narrow sharp leaves and short spikes of small white bell-shaped flowers inhabiting the northern tip of North Island. Leaves 10-25mm long by 1.5-4mm wide. Flowers hairy at top, bell-shaped, 1.5mm wide, in clusters of short spikes along twigs.

DISTRIBUTION
Endemic. North Island, North Cape & Surville Cliffs only

HABITAT
Confined to ultramafic rock and soils where it is a common component of the low windshorn scrub, gullies, cliff faces and talus slopes of that area.
**FEATURES**

Low-growing sprawling subshrub, usually up to 20 cm tall and up to 1 m diam. Branches and branchlets prostrate to decumbent; branchlets c. 1 mm diam., red-brown, with bifarious pubescence or ± glabrous. Leaves spirally arranged, crowded on stems, usually patent, internodes 1.0–1.5 mm. Lamina narrow lanceolate to narrow elliptic, 10.0–25.0 x 1.5–4.0 mm, rigid, planar, red-brown, coriaceous, glabrous; apex mucronate, flushed red; veins prominent, usually 5–7 main veins, light red-brown, adaxial surface slightly rugose; margins entire, rarely with a few teeth at distal end; petiole 0.5–1.0 mm long, attenuate, pale green to cream. Inflorescences axillary and terminal, racemose, flowers hermaphrodite. Peduncle up to 10 mm long, puberulent, with 4–9 flowers. Pedicel < 0.25 mm long or absent; bracts and bracteoles usually 3, 0.5–1.0 x 0.5–1.5 mm, green with cream margins, broad-obovate to orbicular, obtuse, mucerulate, margins ciliolate. Sepals 5, 1.5–1.7 x 1.0–1.2 mm, green with cream margins, elliptic to ovate, imbricate; apex subacute, sometimes slightly mucronulate; margin ciliolate. Corolla white; tube 1.0–1.2 mm long, c. 1.5 mm diam., inner surface glabrous, although usually hairy at the distal end where it grades into the corolla lobes; lobes 5, spreading to recurved, 1.2–2.0 mm long, narrow triangular, acute to subacute, densely hairy on inner surface. Filament fused to corolla tube along most of its length, free part 0.8–0.9 mm long, glabrous, translucent-white. Anthers brown, 0.6–0.9 x c.0.3 mm, with a short (0.1–0.2 mm), brown, or cream-brown apical appendage. Ovary 0.6 x 0.5 mm, ovoid, green, glabrous; style 0.4–0.5 mm long, attenuate at base; stigma red. Glandular scales five, maroon, 0.3 mm long. Immature fruit c. 3 x c. 2 mm, pink-green, obovate to round, surface with raised membranous ridges.

**SIMILAR TAXA**

Easily distinguished from the allied L. fasciculatus and L. parviflorus by its low sprawling subshrub growth habit, with stems prostrate to decumbent; branchlets that are glabrous or bifariously hairy; red-brown to pinkish-green leaves; and by its restriction to the Surville Serpentinite formation (Surville Cliffs, Te Paki). Within its habitat Leucopogon xerampelinus is sympatric with L. fasciculatus with which it does not appear to form hybrids.

**FLOWERING**

September - November

**FLOWER COLOURS**

Brown, White

**FRUITING**

October - April

**LIFE CYCLE**

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

**PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE**

Can be grown from seed and semi-hardwood cuttings. Seed can be tricky and/or slow to germinate and cuttings usually fail to strike as well. However, plants can be easily grown and have no requirement for ultramafic substrates and soils to flourish. An attractive plant that does best in full sun in a free draining soil. When grown in these conditions the pinkish-red to red-brown coloration of the leaves is especially pronounced.

**THREATS**

Not Threatened. One of the most abundant of the Surville Cliff endemics. It is listed only because it is wholly endemic to the 120 ha exposure of serpentinite rock.

**ETYMOLOGY**

leucopogon: White beard (the petals are hairy)

**WHERE TO BUY**

Not commercially available

**ATTRIBUTION**


**REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING**
