

Metrosideros perforata

COMMON NAME

Akatea

SYNONYMS

Leptospermum perforatum J.R.Forst. et G.Forst., *Metrosideros scandens* Sol. ex Gaertn.

FAMILY

Myrtaceae

AUTHORITY

Metrosideros perforata (J.R.Forst. et G.Forst.) A.Rich.

FLORA CATEGORY

Vascular – Native

ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes

ENDEMIC GENUS

No

ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Dicotyledonous Lianes and Related Trailing Plants

NVS CODE

METPER

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

Woody long-climbing vine. Mature plants only reproductive. Leaves more or less circular, dark green above, pale green below, both surfaces covered in fine glandular spots (especially evident on leaf undersides). Flowers white (rarely pink) in dense, terminal, fluffy, clusters.

DISTRIBUTION

Endemic. New Zealand: Three Kings, North and South Islands to about northern Otago and northern Fiordland

HABITAT

Coastal to montane. An abundant plant of open scrub, dense forest or rock-land. In forest and scrub situations climbing on other trees but also climbing up cliff faces, on rock outcrops, and forming a “shrubland” in loose talus



Spotting and punctate glands on abaxial surface of leaf. Boulder Hill. Jan 2013. Photographer: Jeremy Rolfe



Metrosideros perforata. Photographer: DoC

FEATURES

Vine up to 20 m (rarely more long). Bark furrowed, dark grey to brown-black, ± tessellated, and flaking in tabular shards. Growth dimorphic, juvenile and climbing vines sparingly branched, mature (adult - reproductive state) heavily branched. Branchlets terete, ± invested in short dark brown setose hairs. Leaves close-set, coriaceous, glandular punctate (this especially evident on abaxial surface) subsessile; petioles 1.0-3.2 mm long, lamina 6-12 × 5-9 mm, broad-ovate, broad-oblong to suborbicular, obtuse, adaxially dark green, ± glabrous, abaxially very pale green; finely setose; margins recurved. Inflorescences in axillary few-flowered cymose botryia, these crowded towards apex of branchlets; peduncles and pedicels pubescent to setose; peduncles 10-40 mm long, pedicels 5-10 mm. Hypanthium broad-turbinate, initially fleshy, finely tomentose ± glabrescent; calyx lobes broadly deltoid, obtuse; petals caducous, 1.5-3.0 × 1.5-2.8 mm, suborbicular, white or pink; stamens numerous, 8-10 mm long, white (rarely pink). Capsule 4-5 mm diameter, 3-valved, subglobose, exserted, ± woody.

SIMILAR TAXA

Easily distinguished from all other indigenous *Metrosideros* by the small rounded “spotted” (glandular-punctate) leaves, which are dark green above and pale green below (the spotting is most evident on the leaf undersides), and by the dense clusters of white flowers. In its juvenile state it may be confused with juvenile vines of *Metrosideros carminea*. However, the young growth of *Metrosideros carminea* is distinctly pinkish and the leaf hairs are much longer and pink coloured. Despite the common name “white rata” *Metrosideros perforata* is not closely related to *Metrosideros albiflora*, which is a species virtually confined to northern New Zealand kauri (*Agathis australis*) forest, and which has much larger leaves (without obvious glandular spotting) and fewer, larger inflorescences.

FLOWERING

November - March

FLOWER COLOURS

White

FRUITING

February - May

PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

Easily grown from rooted pieces. Can be grown from semi-hardwood cuttings. However like all *Metrosideros* cuttings can be fickle to strike. A tough, resilient rata suitable for open situations and once established tolerant of drought and moderate frost.

ETYMOLOGY

metrosideros: Iron heart

perforata: From the Latin perforatus ‘pierced with holes’, depending on the species this may refer to the foliage covered in punctate oil glands

ATTRIBUTION

Fact sheet prepared for NZPCN by P.J. de Lange (5 January 2013). Description based on fresh material.

CITATION

Please cite as: de Lange, P.J. (Year at time of access): *Metrosideros perforata* Fact Sheet (content continuously updated). New Zealand Plant Conservation Network.

<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/metrosideros-perforata/> (Date website was queried)

MORE INFORMATION

<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/metrosideros-perforata/>