

Myrsine australis

COMMON NAME

red mapou, red matipo, mapau, red maple

SYNONYMS

Suttonia australis Richard, *Myrsine urvillei* A.DC., *Rapanea australis* (Richard) W.R.B.Oliv.

FAMILY

Primulaceae

AUTHORITY

Myrsine australis (A.Rich.) Allan

FLORA CATEGORY

Vascular – Native

ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes

ENDEMIC GENUS

No

ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Trees & Shrubs - Dicotyledons

NVS CODE

MYRAUS

CHROMOSOME NUMBER

2n = 46

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2012 | Not Threatened

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2009 | Not Threatened

2004 | Not Threatened

BRIEF DESCRIPTION

Common tall bushy shrub with bright red twigs bearing wavy yellow-green leaves. Leaves 3-6cm long, with an undulating edge. Flowers small, in clusters. Fruit almost black.

DISTRIBUTION

Endemic. Three Kings, North, South and Stewart Islands.

HABITAT

Common tree of regenerating and mature forest in coastal to montane situations. Often common on northern offshore islands.



Fruit. Photographer: Wayne Bennett



Mapou. Photographer: Wayne Bennett

FEATURES

Shrub or small tree up 6 m tall. Trunk stout, 0.2-0.6 m diam. Bark dark black or purple-black, red on younger branches. Branchlets numerous erect to spreading, very leafy. Petioles stout, fleshy, 5 mm long, often red or green mottled red. Leaves 30-60 x 15-25 mm, dark green to yellow-green variously mottled or blotched with red, or purple spots, leathery, glabrous except for finely pubescent mid vein, obovate-oblong to broad-elliptic, apex obtuse, margins entire, strongly undulate, rarely flat. Inflorescence a fascicle, usually numerous and crowded, produced along branchlets and in leaf axils. Fixed female and inconstant male flowers on different plants, 1.5-2.5 mm diam., white, cream or pale green. Pedicels short, stout, dark red or purple-black. Calyx-lobes 4, sometimes heavily reduced, long persistent. Petals 4, lanceolate, obtuse, free, revolute. Fruit a 1-seeded drupe, 2-3 mm diam., purple-black to black when mature.

SIMILAR TAXA

Distinguished from all other New Zealand Myrsine by the small, purple/wine-red blotched or spotted, strongly undulating obovate-oblong to broad-elliptic leaves.

FLOWERING

August - January

FLOWER COLOURS

Cream, White

FRUITING

September - May

PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

Easy from fresh seed. Can be grown from semi-hardwood cuttings but tricky. Best results are obtained using a mist unit.

ETYMOLOGY

myrsine: Myrrh

australis: Southern

WHERE TO BUY

Occasionally cultivated. Easily grown in a wide range of habitats, making an ideal hedge or small specimen tree. Sometimes available from mainline commercial nurseries, and commonly sold by specialist native plant nurseries.

KEYSTONE IMPORTANCE

One of three known hosts for Adams mistletoe (*Trilepidea adamsii*).

ATTRIBUTION

Fact Sheet Prepared for NZPCN by: P.J. de Lange 28 October 2009. Description based on Allan (1961)

REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

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

NZPCN FACT SHEET CITATION

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MORE INFORMATION

<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/myrsine-australis/>