Myrsine kermadecensis

COMMON NAMES
Kermadec mapou

BIOSTATUS
Native – Endemic taxon

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS
2023 | At Risk – Naturally Uncommon | Qualifiers: CD, IE
Jump to previous conservation statuses

CATEGORY
Vascular

STRUCTURAL CLASS
Trees & Shrubs - Dicotyledons

SIMPLIFIED DESCRIPTION
Small tree bearing wavy dark green leaves and small purple or white fruit inhabiting the Kermadec Islands. Leaves bulging between the veins, 3-7cm long by 1-3.5cm wide. Fruit 6-9mm wide.

FLOWER COLOURS
Green, Yellow

DETAILED DESCRIPTION
Gynodioecious shrub or tree up to 10 m tall; bark firm, rough, initially dark red-brown, aging grey. branches numerous more or less spreading to ascending. Leaves coriaceous, dark or light green, adaxially glossy; petioles stout, 6-15 mmlong; lamina 30-680 × 25-40 mm, elliptic- to obovate-oblong, obtuse or apiculate, mostly entire, sometimes sparingly toothed toward leaf base; margins of shade foliage flat, otherwise slightly to strongly recurved. Inflorescences in many flowered fascicles. Pistillate flowers; greenish yellow with purple spotting or wine-red with purple spotting; calyx 1.0-1.5 mm,tube 0.4-0.6 mm, lobes 4-5, 0.6-0.9 x 0.6-0.8 mm, triangular, glandular, apex acute to subacute; Corolla 2.1-2.7 mm, tube 0.2-0.3 mm,lobes 4-5, 1.9-2.4 x 0.9-1.0 mm, elliptic, glandular, apex acute. Antherodes malformed, 0.75-1.15 x 0.5-0.6 mm, apiculus strongly recurved; pollen absent. Ovary 0.8-0.9 x 0.8-0.9 mm. Stigma 0.3-0.4 mm high, spreading, outer parts appressed to ovary ± 2.5 mm. diameter. Bisexual flowers,greenish yellow with purple spotting or wine-red with purple spotting; calyx 1.0-1.5 mm, tube 0.3-0.5 mm, lobes 4-5, 0.7-1.0 x 0.7-0.8 mm, triangular, glandular, apex acute. Corolla2.7-3.1 mm, tube 0.2-0.3 mm, lobes 4-5, 2.5-2.8 x 1.1-1.3 mm, elliptic, glandular, apex acute. Anthers 1.1-1.8 x 0.8-1.2 mm, apiculus upright; pollen abundant. Ovary 0.75-0.9 x 0.75-1.0 mm. Stigma 0.75-0.8 mm high, upright. Fruit (8)-6-12 mm. diameter when fresh, globose, purple, dark violet-purple or black. Endocarp 3.2-3.5 x 4.0-5.5 mm; buff brown to pale brown with pale longitudinal veins; transversely elliptic to broadly elliptic, terete with 10-12 distinct longitudinal ridges; apex rounded with a small central dimple.

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Raoul Island. Photographer: Peter J de Lange, Date taken: 08/05/2009, Licence: CC BY-NC.

SIMILAR TAXA
As the only species in the genus on the Kermadec Islands, Myrsine kermadecensis, when Raoul Island cannot be confused with any other plant there. However, limited material is in cultivation in New Zealand, and that could be confused with the Three Kings Islands endemic M. oliveri (also in limited cultivation). Myrsine kermadecensis differs vegetatively in that the adult leaves are mostly entire (only rarely toothed, and then sparingly so), and the leaves are uniformly dark (or light) glossy green rather than the sparingly toothed, dark green, yellow-green to green tinged pink leaves typical of M. oliveri. Both species also differ in their floral and fruit characters (see descriptions)

DISTRIBUTION
Endemic. Kermadec Islands: Raoul Island.

HABITAT
A common and important shrub and subcanopy (rarely canopy) species of dry forest on Raoul Island. Near the coast it is often the sole species under dense canopy of Metrosideros kermadecensis. However it is more commonly found in association with Coprosma petiolata, Myoporum rapense subsp. kermadecense in the canopy gaps and near the shore line and further inland with Macropiper excelsum subsp. psittacorum. Coprosma acutifolia and Melicytus aff. ramiflorus. Although most common in dry forest it extends right up into the wet forest and is a sparse component of the wet forest developed along the ridge lines and crater rim.

THREATS
An abundant species on Raoul which is listed only because it occupies a restricted geographic area.

GENUS
Myrsine

FAMILY
Primulaceae

AUTHORITY
Myrsine kermadecensis Cheeseman

SYNONYMS
Rapanea kermadecensis (Cheeseman) Mez; Suttonia kermadecensis (Cheeseman) Cheeseman

ENDEMIC TAXON
Yes

ENDEMIC GENUS
No

ENDEMIC FAMILY
No

FLOWERING
October - April

FRUITING
August - May

PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE
Easily grown from fresh seed. Difficult but can be grown from semi-hardwood cuttings

WHERE TO BUY
Not commercially available

ETYMOLOGY
myrsine: Myrrh
kermadecensis: From the Kermadec Islands

NVS CODE
MYRKER

CHROMOSOME NUMBER

2n = 46

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2017 | At Risk – Naturally Uncommon | Qualifiers: CD, IE
2012 | At Risk – Naturally Uncommon | Qualifiers: CD, IE
2009 | At Risk – Naturally Uncommon | Qualifiers: OL, IE
2004 | Range Restricted
Jump to current conservation status

REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

Allan, H.H. 1961: Flora of New Zealand. Vol. I, Government Printer, Wellington
Heenan, P.B. 1998: Gynodioecy in Myrsine kermadecensis (Myrsinaceae). New Zealand Journal of Botany36: 675-677.
Webb, C.J.; Simpson, M.J.A. 2001: Seeds of New Zealand gymnosperms and dicotyledons. Christchurch, Manuka Press.

ATTRIBUTION

Description adapted by P. J. de Lange from Allan (1961), Heenan (1998) and Webb & Simpson (2001) supplemented by field observations.

NZPCN FACT SHEET CITATION

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

MORE INFORMATION

https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/myrsine-kermadecensis/

PDF DATE

08 June 2026