

Myrsine salicina

COMMON NAMES

toro

BIOSTATUS

Native – Endemic taxon

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2023 | Not Threatened

[Jump to previous conservation statuses](#)

CATEGORY

Vascular

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Trees & Shrubs - Dicotyledons

SIMPLIFIED DESCRIPTION

Small upright tree bearing long narrow smooth leaves that are erect and reddish-yellow when young. Leaves 7-18cm long by 2-3cm wide, with a smooth edge. Fruit red to purple, 8-9mm long.

FLOWER COLOURS

Cream, Yellow

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Small diffuse to moderately densely branched conical, gynodioecious tree up to 10 m tall. Branches stout, upright, glabrous. Bark firm (not flaking) dark red, maroon-red to almost black. Leaves, fleshy-coriaceous, adaxially dark green, yellow-green or pale pinkish-green, usually blemished with maroon spots, abaxially pink to wine-red or pale green, blemishing on adaxial surface apparent on abaxial surface, margins entire, flat or very slightly recurved, midrib deeply impressed adaxially, prominent ridged abaxially (side veins not evident when fresh); petioles 10-14 mm long, fleshy, stout, flattened. Lamina 70-180 × 20-30 mm, narrow-elliptic, narrow-oblong, to linear-oblong, apex obtuse, base attenuate to cuneately narrowed (gradually tapering to base). Inflorescences in ± dense 10-15(-20)-flowered fascicles. Pistillate flowers; greenish yellow to cream with maroon spotting or wine-red with purple-black spotting; calyx 1.3-1.9 mm, tube 0.2-0.6 mm, lobes 4-5, 0.7-1.0 × 0.6-0.8 mm, oblong to ± triangular, apex acute to subacute, margins minutely ciliate; corolla 2.8-4.2 mm, tube 0.2-0.3 mm, lobes 4-5(-6), 2.0-2.4 × 1.0 mm, elliptic, apex acute. Antherodes malformed, 0.82-1.10 × 0.5-0.6 mm, apiculus strongly recurved; pollen absent. Ovary 1 × 1 mm. Stigma 0.30-0.48 mm high, spreading, outer parts appressed to ovary ± 2.5 mm diameter. Bisexual flowers with the same colouration; calyx 1.6-2.0 mm, tube 0.4-0.7 mm, lobes 4-5, 0.7-1.1 × 0.6-0.9 mm, oblong, apex acute, margins minutely ciliate. Corolla 3.0-4.2 mm, tube 0.3-0.6 mm, lobes 4-5, 2.6-2.8 × 1.0-1.4 mm, elliptic, apex acute. Anthers 1.1-1.8 × 0.8-1.2 mm, apiculus upright; pollen white. Ovary 0.7-0.9 × 0.8-1.0 mm. Stigma 0.8-0.85 mm high, upright. Drupe (5-)8-9 mm long, obovoid, flesh red to orange (rarely maroon), on pedicels 8-10 mm long. Endocarp 5.0-6.7 × 3.5-4.5 mm, obovate to broadly obovate, dull, buff to buff brown, orange-brown or henna, bearing 1(-2) seeds.



Pinehaven. Jan 2005. Photographer: Jeremy R. Rolfe, Licence: CC BY.



Coromandel, January. Photographer: John Smith-Dodsworth, Licence: CC BY-NC.

SIMILAR TAXA

Myrsine salicina is easily recognised by its 70-180 × 20-30 mm long, narrow-elliptic, narrow-oblong, to linear-oblong leaves with obtuse apices. It could be confused with toru (*Toronia toru*) which has adaxially very glossy, and coloured linear-lanceolate, yellow-green to dark green often red-tinged or spotted leaves (consider also the Maori name of that tree "toru" vs "toro" for *Myrsine salicina*). However the leaf apices of toru are abruptly acute to apiculate (never obtuse). The flowers of toru are also highly distinctive, being brownish-yellow to yellow and borne in 40-60 mm long, 6-12-flowered racemes. Toru is rarely found in the types of habitats frequent by toro (*Myrsine salicina*).

DISTRIBUTION

Endemic. North, South Islands from Te Pahi to about Hokitika

HABITAT

Coastal to montane in forest (rarely shrubland along riversides). On occasion *Myrsine salicina* may form a major part of forest canopy along stream sides.

GENUS

Myrsine

FAMILY

Primulaceae

AUTHORITY

Myrsine salicina Hew. ex Hook.f.

SYNONYMS

Suttonia salicina Hook.f., *Rapanea salicina* (Hook.f.) Mez

ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes

ENDEMIC GENUS

No

ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

FLOWERING

August - January

FRUITING

September - May

PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

Easily grown from fresh seed. Can be grown from semi-hardwood and hardwood cuttings though these can be slow to strike. An attractive small tree that does best in a semi-shaded site planted in deep, fertile, moist soil. It is remarkably shade and cold tolerant.

ETYMOLOGY

myrsine: Myrrh

salicina: Willow-like

NVS CODE

MYRSAL

CHROMOSOME NUMBER

2n = 46

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2017 | Not Threatened

2012 | Not Threatened

2009 | Not Threatened

2004 | Not Threatened

[Jump to current conservation status](#)

REGIONAL CONSERVATION STATUSES

Auckland: 2025 | Regionally At Risk – Regionally Declining | Qualifiers: Sp, DPS, DPT, PF, RF Help

The regional threat classification system leverages off the national assessments in the NZTCS, providing information relevant for the regional context. Auckland conservation status information is sourced from the [“Conservation status of vascular plant species in Tāmaki Makaurau / Auckland”](#) Simpkins E et al. (2025) report.

REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

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

Webb, C.J.; Simpson, M.J.A. 2001: Seeds of New Zealand Gymnosperms and Dicotyledons. Christchurch, Manuka Press.

ATTRIBUTION

Fact sheet prepared for NZPCN by P.J. de Lange 9 February 2011. Description adapted from Allan (1961) and Webb & Simpson (2001).

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MORE INFORMATION

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

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