Paratrophis banksii

COMMON NAMES
ewekuri, large-leaved milk tree, tūrepo

BIOSTATUS
Native – Endemic taxon

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS
2023 | At Risk – Relict | Qualifiers: Sp, CD, PD
Jump to previous conservation statuses

CATEGORY
Vascular

STRUCTURAL CLASS
Trees & Shrubs - Dicotyledons

SIMPLIFIED DESCRIPTION
Tree with grey spotted bark bearing dark green elliptical leaves that alternate along a slightly zig-zagged stem inhabiting warm areas, mainly on offshore islands. Leaves 3.5–8.5 cm long, paler underneath and vein network is easily visible. Flowers small, in clusters of long spikes. Fruit red, 6 mm wide.

False Watchman. Photographer: John Smith-Dodsworth, Licence: CC BY-NC.

Mana Island. Photographer: Jeremy R. Rolfe, Date taken: 06/02/1987, Licence: CC BY.

FLOWER COLOURS
Cream

DETAILED DESCRIPTION
Dioecious, robust tree or large shrub (depending on growing conditions) up to 12 m tall, usually with a broad canopy crown; trunk up to 0.8 m d.b.h., bark dark brown. **Branches** ascending at first then widely spreading; branchlets somewhat flexuous, wiry and pliant, initially puberulent and very lenticellate, later glabrate. **Leaves of juvenile plants** variable 20–60 × 10–30 mm, dark green above, paler beneath, elliptic-oblong , margins finely to deeply crenate, usually deeply lobed, pandurate, sinus obtuse; petioles up to 8 mm long. **Leaves of adults** 35–85 × 20–35 mm, dark green to yellow green, paler beneath, ovate to broadly ovate, ovate-elliptic, obtuse to subacute, margins crenate (very rarely lobed), petioles stout up to 10 mm long. **Inflorescences** axillary or terminal, spicate, solitary, paired or in threes; staminate up to 30 mm long, densely flowered, flowers rather densely close-set, almost imbricating, grey-green, perianth 4-partite, segments obtuse to rounded; pistillate similar, up to 25 mm long, flowers widely spaced, distichously arranged. **Fruits** up to 65 mm diameter, drupaceous, broad-ovoid, fleshy, flesh red.

SIMILAR TAXA
This species can and does hybridise with *Paratrophis microphylla*, and some mainland populations can be very hard to place in either species. *Paratrophis banksii* generally differs by its non-filiramulate growth habit, larger leaves and drupes.

DISTRIBUTION
Endemic. New Zealand: North Island (mainly easterly from about Kaitaia to East Cape, Waikato and northern Hawke‘s Bay, including islands of the Hauraki Gulf, thence somewhat disjunct reappearing in Horowhenua to Wellington and the western side of Wairarapa), South Island (northern parts where populations are known from Marlborough Sounds (mainly islands), Abel Tasman National Park, and also eastern Golden Bay).

HABITAT
Coastal and lowland forests (0–200 m a.s.l.), preferring deep, fertile soils, large trees are often found on alluvial terraces. On offshore islands it seems more able to tolerate drier conditions and skeletal soils and may at times be found on steep cliff faces, rock ledges, or as stunted shrubs on cobble/boulder beaches.

THREATS
It would appear that this species may once have been quite widespread. However, its current distribution is typically sparse and it is rarely common anywhere except on rodent-free offshore islands in the Hauraki Gulf and off the eastern Coromandel Peninsula. In mainland areas and on rodent infested islands plants are damaged by possum and goat browsing, and also by rodents which avidly eat the fruit, seed and emerging seedlings. In remnants, where isolated trees often exist because the species is dioecious sex imbalance can be an issue. Successful island rodent eradication's have allowed this species to restablish itself. It certainly responds rapidly to rodent removal.

GENUS
Paratrophis

FAMILY
Moraceae

AUTHORITY
Paratrophis banksii Cheeseman

SYNONYMS
Streblus banksii (Cheeseman) C.Webb, Streblus heterophyllus var. ellipticus (Kirk) Corner, Paratrophis heterophylla var. elliptica Kirk

ENDEMIC TAXON
Yes

ENDEMIC GENUS
No

ENDEMIC FAMILY
No

FLOWERING
August–October

FRUITING
October–April

PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE
Easily grown from fresh seed and can be grown from semi-hardwood cuttings (though success varies). A fast growing tree which makes an ideal specimen tree, and can be used as a hedge as it responds well to clipping. Prefers a deep, free draining, fertile soil. Once established it is very drought tolerant.

TAXONOMY
Long known to New Zealanders as *Paratrophis* most of the New Zealand species were transferred to *Streblus* by Corner (1962), with the full transfer completed by Webb (in Connor & Edgar 1987). However, a recent comprehensive study by Gardner et al. (2021) reinstated *Paratrophis* as distinct from a recircumscribed *Streblus*. This decision, followed worldwide is accepted here as well.

ETYMOLOGY
banksii: Named after Sir Joseph Banks, 1st Baronet, GCB, PRS (24 February 1743 - 19 June 1820) was an English naturalist, botanist and patron of the natural sciences.

NVS CODE
STRBAN

CHROMOSOME NUMBER
2n = 28

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2017 | At Risk – Relict | Qualifiers: PD, Sp
2012 | At Risk – Relict | Qualifiers: Sp
2009 | At Risk – Relict | Qualifiers: Sp
2004 | Sparse
Jump to current conservation status

REGIONAL CONSERVATION STATUSES

Auckland: 2025 | Regionally Threatened – Regionally Endangered | Qualifiers: CD, DPR, DPS, DPT, INC, 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

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ATTRIBUTION

Fact sheet prepared for NZPCN by P.J. de Lange January 2005. Description adapted from Allan (1961).

NZPCN FACT SHEET CITATION

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MORE INFORMATION

https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/paratrophis-banksii/

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