Pectinopitys ferruginea

COMMON NAMES
miro, brown pine

BIOSTATUS
Native – Endemic taxon

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS
2023 | Not Threatened
Jump to previous conservation statuses

CATEGORY
Vascular

STRUCTURAL CLASS
Trees & Shrubs - Gymnosperms

FLOWER COLOURS
No flowers

DETAILED DESCRIPTION
Stout tree up to 25 m tall. **Trunk** 1–1.5 m diameter, in adults clear of branches for [illegible] of length. **Bark** thick, grey, falling in thick, sinuous flakes. **Leaves** feathery, dark green, green to bronze-green, distichous, erect, narrow-linear, acute, falcate to subfalcate, acute to subacute, mid vein distinct, margins recurved, juveniles up to 30 mm long, those of adults 15–25 × 2–3 mm. **Male cones (strobili)** solitary, axillary, 5–15 mm long. **Ovules** solitary (rarely paired), on short branchlets ≤ 10 mm long. **Fruit** a broadly oblong to sub-spherical red, pink-red fleshy drupe up to 20 mm long, fleshy, oily, smelling and tasting strongly of terpenes; stone elliptic to broadly elliptic 11–17 mm long, dark brown to black-brown.

SIMILAR TAXA
The bright green to bronze-green, feathery foliage, and pink-red, to red plum-like drupes are quite unlike any other New Zealand conifer. However young miro plants might be confused with yew (*Taxus baccata*), but can be distinguished by their lack of petioles.

DISTRIBUTION
Endemic. North Island, South Island and Stewart Island/Rakiura.

HABITAT
Common tree of lowland to montane forest.

THREATS
Not Threatened, although as a forest-type it has been greatly reduced through widespread logging. Very few intact examples of miro-dominated forest remain in the country.

GENUS
Pectinopitys

FAMILY
Podocarpaceae

AUTHORITY
Pectinopitys ferruginea (G.Benn. ex D.Don in Lamb.) C.N.Page

Eastern Hutt hills. Photographer: Jeremy R. Rolfe, Date taken: 24/02/2007, Licence: CC BY.

Stokes Valley, Lower Hutt. Photographer: Jeremy R. Rolfe, Date taken: 22/09/2004, Licence: CC BY.

SYNONYMS
Podocarpus ferruginea D.Don, Stachypitys ferruginea (D.Don) Bobrov et Melikyan nom. illegit., Stachycarpus ferruginea (D.Don) Tieghem, Prumnopitys ferruginea (D.Don) Laubenf.

TAXONOMIC NOTES
Stachypitys proposed by Bobrov & Melikyan (2000) is regarded as illegitimate because it is a parahomonym of *Stachyopitys* a fossil conifer genus. More recently Page (2019) created the genus *Pectinopitys* to accommodate New Zealand miro, allied species in Eastern Australia (one), New Caledonia (one), and three South American species. It has long been recognised that miro was an 'ill fit' in *Prumnopitys*, which was why Bobrov & Melikayn (2000) made an attempt to move it out of that genus, so this more recent segregation should come as no surprise.

ENDEMIC TAXON
Yes

ENDEMIC GENUS
No

ENDEMIC FAMILY
No

FLOWERING
June–August–October

FRUITING
Fruits take 12–18 months to mature. Ripe fruits are mainly found from November–April.

PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE
Easily grown from fresh seed. Seed may take up to 2 years to germinate. Can be grown from hard-wood cuttings but rather slow to strike.

WETLAND PLANT INDICATOR STATUS RATING
FACU: Facultative Upland
Occasionally is a hydrophyte but usually occurs in uplands (non-wetlands).

CULTURAL USE/IMPORTANCE
The large, oily, red fruits are an important part of the diet of the New Zealand pigeon/kererū/kukupā (*Hemiphaga novaezelandiae*). Indeed, kererū are the only native extand bird species which can disperse these large drupes.

ETYMOLOGY
ferruginea: Rust coloured

NVS CODE
PECFER

CHROMOSOME NUMBER
2n = 36

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 Not Threatened | Qualifiers: DPS, DPT 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.
Otago: 2025 | Regionally Not Threatened Help
The regional threat classification system leverages off the national assessments in the NZTCS, providing information relevant for the regional context. Otago conservation status information is sourced from the "Conservation Status of Indigenous Vascular Plants in Otago, 2025" Jarvie S et al. (2025) report.

REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

Allan HH. 1961. Flora of New Zealand, Volume I. Indigenous Tracheophyta: Psilopsida, Lycopsida, Filicopsida, Gymnospermae, Dicotyledones. Government Printer, Wellington, NZ. 1085 p.
Bobrov AVFCh, Melikyan AP. 2000. Morphology of female reproductive structures and an attempt of the construction of phyogenetic system of orders Podocarpales, Cephalotaxales and Taxales. *Botanicheskii Zhurnal (Moscow & Lenningrad) 85(7)*:50–68.
Page CN. 2019. New and maintained genera in the taxonomic alliance of *Prumnopitys* s.l (Podocarpaceae), and circumscription of a new genus: *Pectinopitys*. *New Zealand Journal of Botany 57(3)*: 137–153. https://doi.org/10.1080/0028825X.2019.1625933.

ATTRIBUTION

Prepared by P.J. de Lange for NZPCN, 3 February 2006. Description based on Allan (1961)

NZPCN FACT SHEET CITATION

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https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/pectinopitys-ferruginea/ (Date website was queried)

MORE INFORMATION

https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/pectinopitys-ferruginea/

PDF DATE

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