

# Peraxilla colensoi

## COMMON NAME

Scarlet mistletoe, korukoru, piritā, roeroe

## SYNONYMS

*Elytranthe colensoi* (Hook.f.) Engl. *Loranthus colensoi* Hook. f.

## FAMILY

Loranthaceae

## AUTHORITY

*Peraxilla colensoi* (Hook.f.) Tiegh.

## FLORA CATEGORY

Vascular – Native

## ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes

## ENDEMIC GENUS

Yes

## ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

## STRUCTURAL CLASS

Trees & Shrubs - Dicotyledons

## NVS CODE

PERCOL

## CHROMOSOME NUMBER

2n= 24

## CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2012 | At Risk – Declining | Qualifiers: CD

## PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2009 | At Risk – Declining | Qualifiers: CD

2004 | Gradual Decline

## BRIEF DESCRIPTION

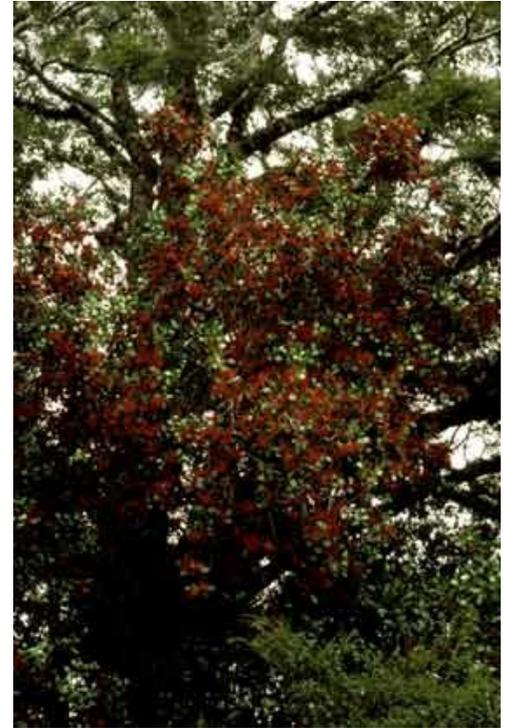
Fleshy shrub to 3m wide growing on outer branches of beech trees with glossy green fleshy paired leaves and masses of red tubular flowers. Leaves to 8cm long, smooth with a red edge. Flowers to 2.5cm long. Fallen petals litter forest floor under plants. Fruit yellow.

## DISTRIBUTION

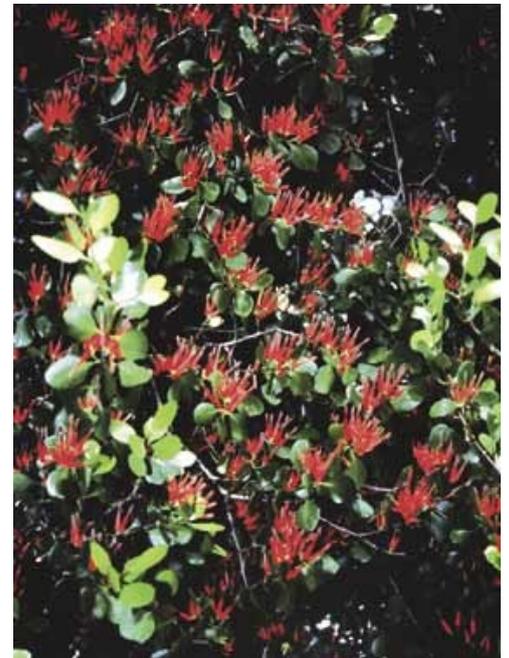
North and South Island, but common only in southern parts of the South Island.

## HABITAT

A parasite mainly found in silver beech forest but has been recorded on 16 host species (9 exotic) in New Zealand including red beech and black beech. Tui (*Prosthemadera novaeseelandiae*) and bellbird (*Anthornis melanura*) disperse this species in the North Island.



Photographer: Brian Molloy



Photographer: John Smith-Dodsworth

## FEATURES

A shrub up to 3 m across. It parasitises further out on branches of its host than *Peraxilla tetrapetala*. The veins on leaves are hardly evident and only the midrib is conspicuous. Leaf tips are never notched and the leaves themselves are large and never blistered. The leaves sit in pairs on opposite sides of the stem and are thick and have a leathery texture. Leaf margins are usually smooth with red slightly rough margins. Masses of scarlet flowers make this plant very obvious from October - January. Flower heads have groups of 3-10 flowers and are up to 60 mm long. The ripe fruit are yellow/golden and are small, fleshy and oval.

## SIMILAR TAXA

*Peraxilla tetrapetala*, *Ileostylus micranthus*. *Peraxilla colensoi* is a larger plant with larger leaves than *P. tetrapetala*, has flowers in clumps of 3-10 and grows on silver beech. *P. tetrapetala* has leaves with blister galls, flowers in clumps of 1-3 and grows on black or mountain beech. *Ileostylus micranthus* does not grow on beech trees and has small, greenish flowers.

## FLOWERING

October to January

## FLOWER COLOURS

Red/Pink

## PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

Can be grown from fresh seed placed on suitable host tissue (ideally *Nothofagus menziesii*). Although seed germinates readily the ability of the seedling to form a firm host is rather variable. Failure rates are high and experimentation with plenty of fresh seed is usually needed.

## THREATS

A wide variety of threats are now acknowledged as working in unison to cause the national decline of this and allied leafy mistletoes species. The most obvious threat seems to be brush tailed possums (*Trichosurus vulpecula*), which heavily browse mistletoes, to such an extent that they are held as the primary cause for the loss of the beech mistletoes from large parts of the countries beech forest.

## ETYMOLOGY

**colensoi**: Named after William Colenso (7 November 1811 - 10 February 1899) who was a Cornish Christian missionary to New Zealand, and also a printer, botanist, explorer and politician.

## WHERE TO BUY

Not commercially available

## OTHER LINKS

[Image of the haustoria of \*Peraxilla colensoi\* by John Dawson \(from Forest Vines to Snow Tussocks\).](#)

## ATTRIBUTION

Fact sheet prepared by P.J. de Lange for NZPCN (1 June 2013)

## REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

[Simpson, M.J.A. 1976. \*Elytranthe\* in the vicinity of Nelson Lakes National Park. Wellington Botanical Society Bulletin, 39: 39-40](#)

## NZPCN FACT SHEET CITATION

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

## MORE INFORMATION

<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/peraxilla-colensoi/>