

# Phormium cookianum subsp. cookianum

## COMMON NAME

mountain flax, wharariki

## SYNONYMS

*Phormium cookianum* Le Jol., *Phormium colensoi* Hook.f., *P. forsterianum* nom. nud.

## FAMILY

Asphodelaceae

## AUTHORITY

*Phormium cookianum* Le Jol. subsp. *cookianum*

## FLORA CATEGORY

Vascular – Native

## ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes

## ENDEMIC GENUS

No

## ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

## STRUCTURAL CLASS

Herbs - Monocots

## NVS CODE

PHOCOL

## CHROMOSOME NUMBER

2n = 32

## CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2017 | Not Threatened

## PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2012 | Not Threatened

2009 | Not Threatened

2004 | Not Threatened

## DISTRIBUTION

Endemic. Scarce in North Island where only known from high alpine situations in the Taranaki Ranges, and possible elsewhere within the central axial ranges. Common in the South Island, in subalpine/alpine situations.

## HABITAT

Strictly confined to subalpine, alpine situations.

## WETLAND PLANT INDICATOR STATUS RATING

FACU: Facultative Upland

Occasionally is a hydrophyte but usually occurs in uplands (non-wetlands).



Hollyford Valley, Fiordland. Photographer: John Sawyer, Licence: CC BY-NC.



Routeburn, Fiordland. Photographer: John Sawyer, Licence: CC BY-NC.

## DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Stout liliaceous herb, 0.6-1(-2) m tall. Leaves numerous, arising from fan-like bases. Individual leaves “paddle-shaped”, erect, stiff, rarely decurved or pendulous 0.6-1(-1.5) x 20-80 mm, glaucous. Lamina margin, entire, somewhat thickened and distinctly pigmented by a dark, rather broad often encircling band 3-5 mm wide. Inflorescence (0.8-)1(-2) m tall, somewhat woody and fleshy when fresh, long persistent, drying charcoal grey or black, with the fibrous interior becoming progressively more exposed. Peduncle 20-30 mm diam., inclined, dark red-green, glabrous. Flowers 25-40 mm long, tubular, dull pink or yellow; tips of inner tepals markedly recurved. Ovary erect. Capsules 100-120 mm long, dark green, trigonous in cross-section, pendulous, tapering toward tip, twisted, initially fleshy becoming papery with age, long persistent. Seeds 8-10 x 4-5 mm, black, elliptic, flat and plate-like, margins frilled or twisted.

## SIMILAR TAXA

Distinguished from *Phormium tenax* by the pendulous, twisted capsules. Differing from subsp. *hookeri* by the much shorter, broader, erect leaves which have a dark coloured band extending in from the leaf lamina some 3-5 mm, and often encircling the entire leaf blade. Ecologically subsp. *cookianum* seems to be confined to subalpine alpine habitats, where it mainly grows in seepages, along stream sides or on the margins of bogs. Occasionally it is sympatric with subsp. *hookeri*.

## FLOWERING

(September-) October-November (-January)

## FLOWER COLOURS

Red/Pink, Yellow

## FRUITING

(November-) December (-March)

## PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

Very easy from fresh seed. Most commonly grown by the division of rooted fans from established plants. Slow to establish and slow growing.

## ETYMOLOGY

**phormium**: Basket or basketwork

**cookianum**: After Captain Cook

## WHERE TO BUY

Uncommon in cultivation.

## ATTRIBUTION

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

## NZPCN FACT SHEET CITATION

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<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/phormium-cookianum-subsp-cookianum/> (Date website was queried)

## MORE INFORMATION

<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/phormium-cookianum-subsp-cookianum/>