Pittosporum dallii

COMMON NAMES
Kahurangi pittosporum

BIOSTATUS
Native – Endemic taxon

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS
2023 | Threatened – Nationally Vulnerable | Qualifiers: CD, DPT, RR, RF
Jump to previous conservation statuses

CATEGORY
Vascular

STRUCTURAL CLASS
Trees & Shrubs - Dicotyledons

SIMPLIFIED DESCRIPTION
Small tree with dark twigs bearing leathery leaves with teeth along the upper half of the margin, clusters of cream flowers and hard capsules inhabiting Northwest Nelson. Capsules 12mm long, longer than wide, splitting into two to show the black sticky seeds in a orange pith.

FLOWER COLOURS
Cream

DETAILED DESCRIPTION
Small spreading tree up to 4–6 × 3–4m, forming a broad canopy crown. Bark dark grey to grey-black. Branches stout, ascending to spreading. Branchlets initially purple-black to reddish-purple or brown, sparsely to distinctly puberulent, maturing grey, glabrate. Leaves alternate to subopposite or whorled, crowded toward branchlet tips; petioles stout, 3–20mm, initially sparsely puberulent, glabrate; lamina 50–100 × 20–40mm, oblong-elliptic, lanceolate, lanceolate-elliptic, rarely obovate, apex obtuse, acute or acuminate, base attenuate, cuneate or acute, margins coarsely serrate, subentire or entire, thickened, slightly revolute, dark green-brown to dark-green above, paler beneath, glabrous, coriaceous; midrib raised above and beneath, secondary veins evident, 14–18 either side of midrib. Inflorescences in condensed, terminal, compound umbels; peduncles subtended by a whorl of leaves and numerous caducous, glabrous, ciliate bud scales 15–22mm, peduncles and pedicels 4-angular, 10–20mm long, accrescent in fruit, white-tomentose, each peduncle bearing 1–6 pedicels, each subtended by caducous, glabrous, linear bracts up to 10mm long. Flowers night-fragrant, gynodioecious. Sepals 5.0–6.0 × 0.5–1.0mm, linear, glabrous; petals 8.0–9.0 × 3.0–3.5mm obovate, linear-oblong, obtuse, spreading from base, white or cream, sometimes with red stripes. Male flowers: stamens 4, filaments 7–8mm, cream, anthers 2–3 × 3mm, yellow, reflexed; gynoecium rudimentary or functional. female; flowers: stamens 4 rudimentary (often reduced to staminodes); ovary 1.5–3.3 × 0.5–1.5mm, globose to ellipsoid, glabrous; style c. 2mm; stigma truncate. Capsules in dense clusters, 15 × 9mm, ellipsoid, ellipsoid-oblong, 2-valved, valves green, greenish brown to black, coriaceous, deciduous, immersed in orange-yellow resinous pulp. Muciliage dark red or orange-yellow. Seeds 20–28, trigonal to irregular, lustrous dark red, held together by a persistent papery, cone-shaped endocarp, long after the valves have dropped.

Pittosporum dallii new foliage. Photographer: John Barkla, Licence: CC BY.

Flowers, Cobb Valley, Kahurangi National Park. Photographer: Simon Walls, Licence: CC BY-NC.

SIMILAR TAXA
A very distinctive species, immediately recognised by the dark purple-black or reddish-purple stems, rather broad, lanceolate, dark brown green toothed leaves, and profuse clusters of creamy white flowers.

DISTRIBUTION
Endemic. South Island, where it is confined to North West Nelson. All known populations occur within the Kahurangi National Park and have a distribution centered on the Cobb and Takaka Rivers.

HABITAT
Silver beech (Nothofagus menziesii (Hook.f.) Oerst.) forest and subalpine scrub. Most (if not all) current occurrences are on or near cliff faces or walking tracks, locations less prone to the influence of browsing animals.

THREATS
Threatened at all known localities by deer and possums browse.

GENUS
Pittosporum

FAMILY
Pittosporaceae

AUTHORITY
Pittosporum dallii Cheeseman

SYNONYMS
None

ENDEMIC TAXON
Yes

ENDEMIC GENUS
No

ENDEMIC FAMILY
No

FLOWERING
November to December (-January)

FRUITING
January to May

PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE
Easy from fresh seed. Can be grown with some difficulty from semi hardwood cuttings. Grafts easily. A remarkably tough and resilient species which can tolerate extremes of drought and moisture. It makes an excellent shrub for a small garden but is rather slow growing, and can be fickle to flower. It does best, and is more likely to flower in cooler places and it should be planted in semi-shade.

CULTIVATION
Occasionally available from commercial garden centres. Plants are held by several specialist native plant nurseries.

PLANT OF THE MONTH
This plant has been featured as a Plant of the Month – see Trilepidea: NZPCN newsletter for March 2011 for the full story.

ETYMOLOGY
pittosporum: Pitch seed

NVS CODE
PITDAL

CHROMOSOME NUMBER
2n = 24

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES
2017 | Threatened – Nationally Vulnerable | Qualifiers: CD, RR, RF
2012 | Threatened – Nationally Vulnerable | Qualifiers: CD, RR
2009 | Threatened – Nationally Vulnerable | Qualifiers: CD, RR
2004 | Threatened – Nationally Vulnerable
Jump to current conservation status

REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING
Cooper, R.C. 1956: The Australian and New Zealand species of Pittosporum. Annals of the Missouri Botanical Garden 43: 87-188
Patterson, J., Patterson, G. 1956. In search of *Pittosporum dallii*. Wellington Botanical Society Bulletin, 28: 14-23
Potts, N. 1947. Boulder Lake and *Pittosporum dalli*. Wellington Botanical Society Bulletin, 16: 2-3

ATTRIBUTION
Fact sheet prepared for NZPCN by P.J. de Lange 30 August 2006. Description adapted from Cooper (1956).

NZPCN FACT SHEET CITATION
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MORE INFORMATION
https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/pittosporum-dallii/

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