

Pittosporum eugenioides

COMMON NAMES

tarata, lemonwood

BIOSTATUS

Native – Endemic taxon

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2023 | Not Threatened

[Jump to previous conservation statuses](#)

CATEGORY

Vascular

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Trees & Shrubs - Dicotyledons

SIMPLIFIED DESCRIPTION

Tree bearing light green wavy-edge oval leaves and with a contrasting pale green central vein, dense sprays of yellow flowers and small dry fruits. Leaf buds covered in dark-edged scales. Fruit pointed, 5-6mm long which splits into two to show a papery layer covering black sticky seeds.

FLOWER COLOURS

Yellow

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Gynodioecious tree up to 12 m tall but usually much less. Trunk 0.6-1 m diam, stout, clad in persistent pale-grey bark, branches numerous, erect then spreading. Leaf buds sticky, resinous. Leaves borne on slender petioles 10-20 mm long, alternate, 50-100(-150) x 25-40 mm, yellow-green, green, more or less blotched and mottled with paler green or yellow-green (sometimes white), somewhat leathery, glossy, smelling strongly when crushed of ivy or resin, elliptic to elliptic-oblong, apex acute to subacute; leaf margin undulate (very rarely not so), midrib pale green. Inflorescences terminal, numerous, subcorymbose compound umbels. Flowers pale yellow to yellow, very fragrant. Peduncles 10-20 mm, pedicels 5 mm, both sparsely hairy. Sepals 2 mm, ovate to narrow-ovate, pale caducous. Petals 5, 5-7 mm long, narrow-oblong. Capsules 2-valved (rarely 3), 5-6 mm, ovoid to elliptic, caducous, seeds immersed in dark yellow viscid pulp, whole structure covered in long persistent papery endocarp.

SIMILAR TAXA

Well marked from all other indigenous and exotic *Pittosporum* spp. in New Zealand, by the yellow-green, mottled lanceolate leaves with undulating margins, and pale-yellow to yellow flowers arranged in subcorymbose compound umbels.

DISTRIBUTION

Endemic. Common in the North and South Islands.

HABITAT

Common tree of regenerating and mature forest in coastal to montane situations.

GENUS

Pittosporum



Female flowers. Oct 2006. Photographer: Peter J de Lange, Licence: CC BY-NC.



Female flowers. Oct 2006. Photographer: Peter J de Lange, Licence: CC BY-NC.

FAMILY

Pittosporaceae

AUTHORITY

Pittosporum eugenioides A.Cunn.

SYNONYMS

Pittosporum elegans Raoul, *P. microcarpum* Putt.

ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes

ENDEMIC GENUS

No

ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

FLOWERING

October - December

FRUITING

October - January

PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

Easy from fresh seed. Can be grown from semi-hardwood cuttings.

CULTIVATION

Commonly cultivated and available from most garden centres, and then often as a variegated form rather than the pure plant. Occasionally seen for sale in European and English garden centres.

ETYMOLOGY

pittosporum: Pitch seed

eugenioides: Like *Eugenia*, a species of myrtle

NVS CODE

PIEUG

CHROMOSOME NUMBER

$2n = 24$

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 Data Deficient 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

- Cooper, R.C. 1956: The Australian and New Zealand species of *Pittosporum*. *Annals of the Missouri Botanical Garden* 43: 87-188
- Gardner, R. 1999. Notes towards an excursion Flora. *Pittosporum eugenioides* as a wild plant. *Auckland Botanical Society Journal*, 54, 1

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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<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/pittosporum-eugenioides/> (Date website was queried)

MORE INFORMATION

<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/pittosporum-eugenioides/>

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