Pittosporum rangitahua

COMMON NAMES
Raoul Island kōhūhū

BIOSTATUS
Native – Endemic taxon

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS
2023 | Threatened – Nationally Increasing | Qualifiers: CD, IE, OL
Jump to previous conservation statuses

CATEGORY
Vascular

STRUCTURAL CLASS
Trees & Shrubs - Dicotyledons

SIMPLIFIED DESCRIPTION
Small densely branched tree with erect branches. Young broanchelst covered in white hairs. Leaves crowded toward branchlet apices. Leaves oblanceolate, with densely white-hairy undersides and mostly hairless, gloosy upper surfaces. Flowers red-purple borne in terminal 3-14-flowered umbels. Fruits capsular, globose 2-3-valved; seeds 20-30 per fruit, blossy black, embedded in sticky yellow to yellow-orange mucilage.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION
Densely branched small tree 3–8 m tall. Primary branches erect, with secondary and tertiary branches erect to ascending. Branchlets are at first densely white-tomentose, becoming grey-brown and sparsely tomentose with aging; bark smooth, grey-brown and glabrous. Leaf scars consistently have three vascular bundles. Leaves are crowded towards the ends of bare branchesLeaves entire, alternate, coriaceous, oblanceolate, 40–97 × 10–27 mm, 3–6x longer than broad; weakly revolute with the midrib slightly sunken; apex subacute to rounded; base cuneate; petioles 5–10 mm long; adaxial leaf surface initially covered in dense white tomentum, soon deciduous and revealing a bright green leaf surface. Adaxial surface with dense white felted hairs which thin out as the leaf ages. Secondary leaves are alternate, entire, leaf lamina with fringe of marginal hairs, and few-many hairs along the midrib (especially on the abaxial side), otherwise glabrous; petiole sparsely hairy. Inflorescences terminal umbels with (3–)6–14 flowers per umbel. Subtending bracts are few, caducous, linear, 5–11 mm long, covered in off-white tomentum. Pedicels 10–25 mm long, covered in off-white tomentum. Flowers gynodioecious, sweetly scented. Sepals 5, unequal, 6–11 × 1.0–2.5 mm, narrow-triangular, acute-tipped; except for lower adaxial surface, covered in off-white tomentum, do not reflex (deciduous by fruiting stage). Petals red-purple (occasionally paler), free, 12–17(–19) × 4–6 mm, ± oblong-obovoid, upper third becoming reflexed, ± glabrous. Stamens 5, antisepalous, dorsifixed. Ovary superior, pilose, gynoecium of two fused carpels. Style unbranched. Capsule 2 (-3)-valved, globose, 12–18 mm diameter; valves whitish tomentose outside, pale brown and rugose inside, becoming woody at dehiscence; peduncles erect to spreading. Seeds are 20–30/capsule, viscid, lustrous black, irregular, 4.0–5.5 mm long, and many flat faces meeting along ± sharp edges

Raoul Island. Jun 2001. Photographer: Gillian M. Crowcroft, Licence: All rights reserved.

Raoul Island. Feb 1999. Photographer: Peter J de Lange, Licence: CC BY-NC.

SIMILAR TAXA
Differs from *Pittosporum crassifolium* and *P. fairchildii* by the usually narrower leaf shape, wider angle of the secondary leaf veins, thinner and more erect branches, longer and narrower sepals, generally longer and wider petals, 2-valved and smaller capsules, and sharp-angled seeds.

DISTRIBUTION
Endemic. Kermadec Islands group, Raoul Island only

HABITAT
A species of shaded coastal cliffs, rock outcrops and open ground within the 'dry' forest association dominated by Kermadec pohutukawa (*Metrosideros kermadecensis*).

THREATS
Known only from Raoul Island where this species occurs in scattered and often small populations. Following goat and rat eradication from the islands (declared free of major mammalian pests in 2006) this species has started to expand it range. Currently there is an estimated adult population of 1000 individuals, which is actively increasing. For this reason the species, listed as as *Pittosporum* aff. *crassifolium* (AK 253259; Raoul Island) had been assessed as 'At Risk / Recovering' by de Lange et al. (2012). Cameron & Sykes (2015) have upheld this assessment. However, should *Phytophthora* reach the Kermadecs it is likely that this species would then be seriously at risk of extinction.

GENUS
Pittosporum

FAMILY
Pittosporaceae

AUTHORITY
Pittosporum rangitahua E.K.Cameron et Sykes

SYNONYMS
None - first described in 2015

ENDEMIC TAXON
Yes

ENDEMIC GENUS
No

ENDEMIC FAMILY
No

FRUITING
Present throughout year

PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE
Easily grown from fresh seed. However plants are often short-lived and very susceptible to phytophthora

ETYMOLOGY
pittosporum: Pitch seed
rangitahua: Rangitahua is believed to be the Maori name for Raoul Island.

CHROMOSOME NUMBER
2n = 24

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES
2017 | At Risk – Recovering | Qualifiers: CD, IE, OL
2015 | At Risk – Recovering
Jump to current conservation status

REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

Cameron, E.K.; Sykes, W.R. 2015: *Pittosporum rangitahua* sp.nov. from Raoul Island, Kermadec islands, northern New Zealand. *Auckland Museum Bulletin 20*: 253-262.

de Lange, P.J.; Rolfe, J.R.; Champion, P.D.; Courtney, S.P.; Heenan, P.B.; Barkla, J.W.; Cameron, E.K.; Norton, D.A.; Hitchmough, R.A. 2013: Conservation status of New Zealand vascular plants, 2012. *New Zealand threat classification series 3*. Department of Conservation, Wellington. 70 pp.

ATTRIBUTION

Fact sheet prepared by P.J. de Lange (19 October 2015). Description modified from Cameron & Sykes (2015).

NZPCN FACT SHEET CITATION

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

MORE INFORMATION

https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/pittosporum-rangitahua/

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