

Plagianthus regius subsp. regius

COMMON NAME

Manatu, ribbonwood, lowland ribbonwood

SYNONYMS

Philippodendrum regium Poiteau, Plagianthus betulinus A.Cunn.,
Plagianthus betulinus A.Cunn. var. betulinus, Plagianthus urticinus A.Cunn.

FAMILY

Malvaceae

AUTHORITY

Plagianthus regius (Poit.) Hochr. subsp. regius

FLORA CATEGORY

Vascular – Native

ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes

ENDEMIC GENUS

Yes

ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Trees & Shrubs - Dicotyledons

NVS CODE

PLARSR

CHROMOSOME NUMBER

2n = 42

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2012 | Not Threatened

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2009 | Not Threatened

2004 | Not Threatened

BRIEF DESCRIPTION

Tall tree with soft jagged pointed leaves and long sprays of tiny yellowish flowers and small green fruit that fall as a unit. Wood soft. Leaves 3-7.5cm long, much wider at base. Juveniles with tangled twigs bearing shorter rounded leaves with blunt bases.

DISTRIBUTION

Endemic. New Zealand: North, South and Stewart Islands

HABITAT

Coastal to lower montane. Often a prominent tree in lowland alluvial forest.

SIMILAR TAXA

Plagianthus regius subsp. chathamicus is very similar. It is endemic to the Chatham Islands and differs only from subsp. regius by the complete lack of the filiramulate, divaricating juvenile growth habit typical of subsp. regius. Both subspecies are now present in New Zealand proper, and subsp. chathamicus is now often sold from garden centres as *P. regius*. So look for the divaricating growth habit if you want to ensure you have the appropriate plant for your area.



Rimutaka Rail Trail. Dec 2006. Photographer: Jeremy Rolfe



Foliage of Plagianthus regius. Photographer: John Smith-Dodsworth

FLOWERING

September - November

FLOWER COLOURS

Green

PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

Easily grown from fresh seed. However, seed is often difficult to obtain because it is usually damaged by insects. A very fast growing tree which is an excellent specimen tree for a large garden or park. Does well in most situations but prefers a fertile, moist but free draining soil.

ETYMOLOGY

plagianthus: Oblique or lop-sided flower (petals uneven at the base)

regius: Royal

REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

Wilcox, M.D. 2002. Lowland ribbonwood *Plagianthus regius* at Clevedon. Auckland Botanical Society Journal, 57: 144-146

MORE INFORMATION

<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/plagianthus-regius-subsp-regius/>