Pseudopanax colensoi var. colensoi

COMMON NAME
mountain fivefinger, three finger

SYNONYMS
Panax colenso Hook.f., Pseudopanax colensoi (Hook.f.) Philipson, Pseudopanax colensoi var. fiordensis Wardle, Neopanax colensoi (Hook.f.) Allan, Nothopanax (Hook.f.) Seem.

FAMILY
Araliaceae

AUTHORITY
Pseudopanax colensoi (Hook.f.) Philipson var. colensoi

FLORA CATEGORY
Vascular – Native

ENDEMIC TAXON
Yes

ENDEMIC GENUS
No

ENDEMIC FAMILY
No

STRUCTURAL CLASS
Trees & Shrubs - Dicotyledons

CHROMOSOME NUMBER
2n = 48

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS
2012 | Not Threatened

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES
2009 | Not Threatened
2004 | Not Threatened

BRIEF DESCRIPTION
Small much-branched tree with 5 fleshy leaflets arranged fanwise on very short stems

DISTRIBUTION
Central North Island and Coromandel Range south to Banks Peninsula (and possibly Dunedin) on South Island east coast. Apparently absent from South Island West Coast. Plants with sessile leaflets from the Fiordland-Stewart Island area are often referred to Pseudopanax colensoi var. fiordensis Wardle

HABITAT
Montane to low alpine forest and scrub
FEATURES
Us. dioecious. Small multi-branched tree to 8 m tall, branchlets fleshy brittle. Leaves alternate, leaflets (3-)5(-7), palmate, subsessile or on short petiolules. Petioles 5-20 cm long, sheathing branchlet at base and with small erect stipule. Petiolules absent or short, of terminal leaflet to 0-5-10-(15) mm long, shorter on lateral leaflets, pale green, reddish at base. Leaflets narrow-ovate to broadly elliptic-oblong, cuneately narrowing to petiolule, thinly coriaceous, coarsely serrate-dentate in upper 2/3 - 3/4, acute to obtuse; midrib obvious above and below, lateral veins obscure; darker shiny green above; terminal lamina 5-17 x 2-11 cm, lateral leaflets decreasing in size. Inflorescence a terminal umbel; c. 8 primary rays (branchlets); 10-12 secondary rays; umbellules with 5-10 flowers in each. Calyx truncate or obscurely 5-toothed; flowers c. 5 mm diam.; petals 5, cream or greenish, ovate to triangular, acute; ovary 2-loculed, each containing 1 ovules; style branches 2. Fruit fleshy, 4-6 mm diam., style branches retained on an apical disc, dark purple when ripe. Seeds 2 per fruit, shallowly wrinkled, 2.9-4.3 mm long, rounded.

SIMILAR TAXA
Often confused with Pseudopanax arboreus, which also has 5 leaflets, from this species it can be distinguished by its shorter petiolules (leaflet stalk) and the base of the leaflet gradually narrowing to petiolule. The other varieties of Pseudopanax colensoi are distinguished their number of leaflets and distribution. The presence of a range of forms of probable hybrid arrangement at some sites can make identification difficult at times.

FLOWERING
October-March

FLOWER COLOURS
Cream, Green

FRUITING
October-March

ETYMOLOGY
pseudopanax: False cure
colensoi: Named after William Colenso (7 November 1811 - 10 February 1899) who was a Cornish Christian missionary to New Zealand, and also a printer, botanist, explorer and politician.

NOTES ON TAXONOMY
Pseudopanax colensoi var. fiordensis remains poorly understood. It may yet prove distinct from P. colensoi s.s. but further study is required. Recently, Frodin, D.G. and Govaerts, R (2003: World Checklist and Bibliography of Araliaceae, The Cromwell Press, European Union) reinstated Neopanax based on molecular and morphological evidence. In their work they did not provide combinations of the varieties recognised by Peter Wardle in N. colensoi (as P. colensoi). So as to avoid potential confusion we retain Neopanax colensoi in Pseudopanax until this issue is rectified.

ATTRIBUTION
Description adapted from Wardle (1968), Allan (1961), Webb and Simpson (2001).

REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING
Wardle, P. 1968. The taxonomy and distribution of the stipulate species of Pseudopanax in New Zealand. NZ J. Botany 6: 226-236

MORE INFORMATION