Pseudopanax gilliesii

BIOSTATUS
Native – Endemic taxon

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS
2023 | At Risk – Naturally Uncommon | Qualifiers: Sp, DPS, DPT, RR
Jump to previous conservation statuses

CATEGORY
Vascular

STRUCTURAL CLASS
Trees & Shrubs - Dicotyledons

SIMPLIFIED DESCRIPTION
Small tree with a mix of single or 3 leathery leaflets on stalks that become much longer in the lower part of the twigs.

FLOWER COLOURS
Green

DETAILED DESCRIPTION
Shrubby much-branched small tree to 5 m tall; branchlets slender, fleshy, brittle, light green to purpled; bark pale brown, lenticels prominent. Leaves alternate, unifoliate intermixed with trifoliate or irregularly lobed leaves; Petioles 2-8 cm long; lamina coriaceous, glossy green above, paler green below, c. 4-8 cm long, ovate, acute to acuminate, sharply serrate, on long slender petioles to 14 cm long in lower part of branchlet, trifoliate leaflets sessile or on very short petiolule; midvein prominent, lateral veins obvious. Inflorescence a terminal umbel; primary rays 3-6, c. 8 cm long, flowers racemosely arranged. Ovary 5-loculed, each containing 1 ovule (some aborted); style branches 5, connate. Fruit fleshy, subglobose, 6 x 5 mm, style branches retained on an apical disc, dark purple when ripe. Seeds 5 per fruit, narrowly ovate, 5.5-6.5 mm long.

SIMILAR TAXA
Most similar to *Pseudopanax discolor* from which it differs by the alternating whorls of unifoliolate to trifoliolate rather than 5-foliolate leaves, which are much thicker, more finely serrated and usually uniformly dark green to light green rather than gren to yellow green, variously spotted or stained maroon. Aside from these differences the ranges of *P. gilliesii* and *P. discolor* don't overlap. *Pseudopanax gilliesii* might be confused with *P. lessonii*, with which it co-occurs. *Pseudopanax lessonii* is however a taller tree species, with much thicker 5-foliolate or trifoliate leaves with shallower toothing restricted to the distal 3/4 of the lamina.

DISTRIBUTION
Endemic. Northeastern Northland

HABITAT
Coastal or lowland hardwood forest and shrubland

THREATS
Probably a species naturally restricted to the northeastern non-basaltic Northland volcanics. Some habitat has been lost in the past to coastal development. Reports of this species occurring on Hauturu o Toi / Little Barrier Island are based on collections of what appears to be *Pseudopanax discolor* or perhaps a hybrid between that species and *P. lessonii*. *Pseudopanax gilliesii* is not found on that island/



Fruit. Auckland. Feb 2007. Photographer: Peter J de Lange, Licence: CC BY-NC.



Pseudopanax gilliesii shrub. Photographer: Peter J de Lange, Licence: CC BY-NC.

GENUS
Pseudopanax

FAMILY
Araliaceae

AUTHORITY
Pseudopanax gilliesii Kirk

ENDEMIC TAXON
Yes

ENDEMIC GENUS
Yes

ENDEMIC FAMILY
No

ETYMOLOGY
pseudopanax: False cure

NVS CODE
PSEGIL

CHROMOSOME NUMBER
2n = 48

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES
2017 | At Risk – Naturally Uncommon | Qualifiers: DP, RR, Sp
2012 | At Risk – Naturally Uncommon | Qualifiers: RR, Sp
2009 | At Risk – Naturally Uncommon
2004 | Range Restricted
Jump to current conservation status

REGIONAL CONSERVATION STATUSES
Northland: 2026 | Regionally At Risk – Regionally Naturally Uncommon Help
Current regional threat status assessments prepared according to Crisp et al. (2025) are displayed when available. The Northland conservation status information is sourced from the "Conservation status of indigenous vascular plants in Northland | Taitokerau" Ford et al. 2026 report.

REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING
Allan, H.H. 1961. Flora of NZ, Vol. I. Government Printer, Wellington
Webb, C.J. & Simpson, M.J.A. 2001. Seeds of NZ gymnosperms and dicotyledons. Manuka Press, Christchurch.

ATTRIBUTION
Description adapted from Allan (1961) and Webb and Simpson (2001).
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MORE INFORMATION
https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/pseudopanax-gilliesii/

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