

Pseudopanax kermadecensis

COMMON NAMES

Kermadec five finger

BIOSTATUS

Native – Endemic taxon

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2023 | At Risk – Naturally Uncommon | Qualifiers: CD, IE

[Jump to previous conservation statuses](#)

CATEGORY

Vascular

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Trees & Shrubs - Dicotyledons

SIMPLIFIED DESCRIPTION

Tree bearing leaves that have usually seven thin pointed leaflets radiating out from the tip of a long stalk inhabiting Raoul Island in the Kermadec Islands. Leaflets 10-15cm long. Flowers in clusters on wide-angled stalks. Fruits flattened, with small cap.

FLOWER COLOURS

Green, Yellow

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Small multi-branched tree to 10 m tall, branchlets brittle, trunk to 1 m diam. Leaves alternate, leaflets 5-8 (us. 7), palmate, on short petiolules. Petiole to 15 cm long, sheathing branchlet at base. Petiolule of terminal leaflet obvious, of lateral leaflets shorter or subsessile. Leaflets elliptic to elliptic-ovate, membranous, greenish grey above, paler below, margin bluntly dentate-serrate in distal half or entire, obliquely cuneately narrowing to petiolule, acute; midveins and main lateral veins obvious above and below; terminal lamina 10-15 x 3.5-7 cm, lateral leaflets smaller. Inflorescence a terminal, compound, compact umbel; primary rays (branchlets) c. 8, 4 cm long; secondary rays 8-12, 2-3 cm long. Male flowers to 1 cm diam., pale yellowish green; petals acute; anthers cream, filaments > petal. Ovary 2-loculed, each containing 1 ovules; style branches 2, spreading. Fruit fleshy, purple, c. 5 mm diam., laterally compressed, style branches retained on an apical disc. 2 Seeds per fruit, broadly-ovate or oblong, wrinkled, 3.5-4.2 mm long.

SIMILAR TAXA

Similar to *Pseudopanax arboreus*, but in that species the leaves are darker green with coarse teeth around all the margin and with a more open inflorescence. It also typically has 5 leaflets. The natural distribution of these two species does not overlap.

DISTRIBUTION

Endemic. Kermadec Islands, Raoul Island

HABITAT

Coastal to main summit ridges and crater rim in both dry and wet forest types. However, Kermadec five finger is mostly found in the wet forest type (> 230 m a.s.l.) on Raoul Island, where it forms part of the subcanopy in *Metrosideros*-dominated forest with *Coprosma acutifolia* and *Ascarina lucida* var. *lanceolata*. In some places, such as the exposed ridge lines leading from Moumoukai to Mahoe it may form a major part of the forest canopy.

THREATS

Listed only because it is a local, narrow-range endemic confined to a single island within the Kermadec island group. Prior to the successful goat eradication, this species was extremely uncommon and easily qualified as threatened. Since the last goat was shot on the island in 1983 this species has made a spectacular recovery and it is now abundant throughout the island.



Raoul Island. Photographer: Bec Stanley, Licence: CC BY-SA.

GENUS

Pseudopanax

FAMILY

Araliaceae

AUTHORITY

Pseudopanax kermadecensis (W.R.B.Oliv.) Allan

SYNONYMS

Nothopanax kermadecensis W.R.B.Oliv., Neopanax kermadecensis (W.R.B.Oliv.) Phillipson Pseudopanax arboreus var. kermadecensis (W.R.B.Oliv.) Sykes

TAXONOMIC NOTES

This species was transferred back to Neopanax Allan by: Frodin, D.G.; Govaerts, R. 2003: World Checklist and Bibliography of Araliaceae, The Cromwell Press, European Union. Phylogenetic studies reveal that Kermadec five finger is nested within the New Zealand five finger (*P. arboreus*). Despite that finding both species are amply distinct from each other.

ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes

ENDEMIC GENUS

Yes

ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

FLOWERING

February - August

FRUITING

March - February

PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

Easily grown from fresh seed and semi-hardwood cuttings. Although frost-tender this species has been successfully cultivated as far south as Wellington (Petone). Like most other species in the genus it is very fast growing, and inclined to be short-lived. Plants do best in semi-shade, planted in a free draining, moist soil. Like many of the species in this genus Kermadec five finger is prone to phytophthora and verticillium wilt.

ETYMOLOGY

pseudopanax: False cure

kermadecensis: From the Kermadec Islands

NVS CODE

PSEKER

CHROMOSOME NUMBER

2n = 48

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2017 | At Risk – Naturally Uncommon | Qualifiers: CD, IE

2012 | At Risk – Naturally Uncommon | Qualifiers: CD, IE

2009 | At Risk – Naturally Uncommon | Qualifiers: RC, OL, IE

2004 | Range Restricted

[Jump to current conservation status](#)

REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

- Sykes, W.R. 1993. Reinstatement of *Pseudopanax kermadecensis* (W.R.B.Oliv.) Philipson (Araliaceae)
Allan, H.H. 1961. Flora of NZ, Vol. I. Government Printer, Wellington, Eagle, A. 2000. Eagle's complete trees and shrubs of NZ. Te Papa Press, Wellington
Webb, C.J. & Simpson, M.J.A. 2001. Seeds of NZ gymnosperms and dicotyledons. Manuka Press, Christchurch.

ATTRIBUTION

Description adapted from Sykes (1993), Allan (1961) and Webb and Simpson (2001).

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MORE INFORMATION

<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/pseudopanax-kermadecensis/>

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