

Pseudowintera insperata

COMMON NAMES

Northland horopito

BIOSTATUS

Native – Endemic taxon

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2023 | Threatened – Nationally Critical | Qualifiers: Sp

[Jump to previous conservation statuses](#)

CATEGORY

Vascular

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Trees & Shrubs - Dicotyledons

SIMPLIFIED DESCRIPTION

Small tree with dark trunks and reddish twigs bearing shiny oval leaves that are white underneath (excepting central vein) inhabiting sites in Northland. Leaves 35-110mm long by 18-45mm, central vein green above, red underneath. Flowers small, green. Fruit small and purple.

FLOWER COLOURS

Cream, Yellow

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Shrub or small tree up to 7 m tall; trunks and branches upright. Branchlets red-brown to maroon-black, glabrous or hairy. Leaf buds and expanding leaves usually hairy on lamina margin, undersides and petiole. Petiole 4-11 x 1.4-2.4 mm, red-brown to maroon. Leaves 35-110 x 18-45 mm, upper surface glossy, dark green to yellow-green, without blemishes or blotches; midvein conspicuous, pale cream to yellow-green, glabrous or sparsely hairy; lamina broadly obovate, oblanceolate, elliptic, broadly elliptic to orbicular, coriaceous; undersides white; midvein red, sparsely hairy or glabrous. Inflorescences axillary, flowers bisexual, solitary or in fascicles of 2-3. Calyx cupule 2.8-2.9 mm diam., margins entire. Corolla comprised of 5-8 free petals, these 3.8-7.0 x 2.3-3.0 mm, broadly elliptic, cream, apex obtuse. Carpels 2-5, free, obovoid, stigma apical. Stamens 13-22, free. Fruit a 1-4-seeded berry, 6.4-9.8 x 4.9-1.8-2.3 mm, black, obovoid to obovoid-oblong.

SIMILAR TAXA

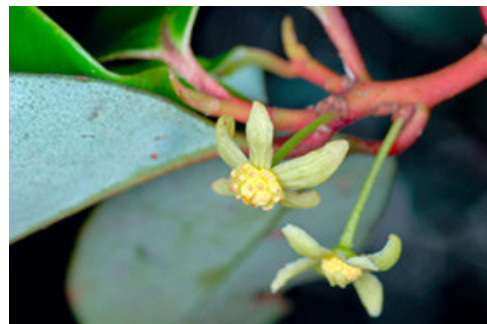
Distinguished from *P. axillaris*, *P. colorata* and *P. traversii* by its small tree habit, with an erect growth form, broadly obovate to broadly elliptic leaves that are glossy, without blemishes and blotches, and by the conspicuous pale cream to yellow-green midvein. The inflorescences have ciliate bracts, and an entire cupule, and the fruits are black.

DISTRIBUTION

Endemic. North Island, formerly on all the northern Whangarei Harbour highpoints from Maungatapere to Bream Head, and also at Logues Bush near Wellsford. Now only known from Mt Manaia, Bream Head and Logues Bush.

HABITAT

Coastal, lowland, and alluvial forest, and on exposed ridge tops within low windshorn scrub and forest overlying skeletal soils developed on igneous (andesitic and basaltic) rocks, talus and rock outcrops.



Bream Head. Aug 2008. Photographer: A. J. Townsend, Licence: CC BY-NC.



Close up of foliage (top side) of *Pseudowintera insperata*, Ex Cult. Bream Head (grown at University of Auckland), November 2005. Photographer: Peter J de Lange, Licence: CC BY-NC.

THREATS

Herbarium specimens suggest there was once six discrete populations, three of these are now probably extinct. Of the remaining three, one plant survives at Logues Bush, and there are c.50 adult plants at the other two sites. Although recruitment is happening at the two main populations, all three populations occupy an area of < 1 ha. Although active threats are not evident, one population is potentially vulnerable to trampling. The plant at Logues Bush is in ill thrift. For all these reasons this species is regarded as seriously threatened. However, it is cryptic, and easily overlooked and current population estimates are probably inaccurate. For these reasons the threat ranking is qualified as Data Poor (DP)

GENUS

Pseudowintera

FAMILY

Winteraceae

AUTHORITY

Pseudowintera insperata Heenan et de Lange

SYNONYMS

None

TAXONOMIC NOTES

Recognised as distinct in 2003. Prior to that these northerly plants had usually been referred to *P. axillaris* or as hybrids between *P. axillaris* and *P. colorata*.

ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes

ENDEMIC GENUS

Yes

ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

FLOWERING

(October-) December - February

FRUITING

November - May

PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

Can be grown from semi-hardwood cuttings which, though slow strike readily. Fresh seed should germinate well, though it may take 1-2 years to germinate.

PLANT OF THE MONTH

This plant has been featured as a Plant of the Month – see [Trilepidea: NZPCN newsletter for January 2007](#) for the full story.

ETYMOLOGY

pseudowintera: False *Wintera* (a related genus)

CHROMOSOME NUMBER

2n = 84

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2017 | Threatened – Nationally Critical | Qualifiers: Sp
2012 | Threatened – Nationally Critical | Qualifiers: DP
2009 | Threatened – Nationally Critical | Qualifiers: DP
2004 | Not Threatened

[Jump to current conservation status](#)

REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

Heenan, P. B. and de Lange, P. J. 2006: *Pseudowintera insperata* (Winteraceae), an overlooked and rare new species from northern New Zealand. *New Zealand Journal of Botany* 44: 89–98.

ATTRIBUTION

Fact Sheet prepared for NZPCN by P.J. de Lange 12 December 2006: Description modified from Heenan & de Lange (2006).

NZPCN FACT SHEET CITATION

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<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/pseudowintera-insperata/> (Date website was queried)

MORE INFORMATION

<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/pseudowintera-insperata/>

PDF DATE

25 May 2026