

Schefflera digitata

COMMON NAME

Patatē, patē, seven-finger

FAMILY

Araliaceae

AUTHORITY

Schefflera digitata J.R.Forst. et G.Forst.

FLORA CATEGORY

Vascular – Native

ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes

ENDEMIC GENUS

No

ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Trees & Shrubs - Dicotyledons

NVS CODE

SCHDIG

CHROMOSOME NUMBER

2n = 24

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2012 | Not Threatened

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2009 | Not Threatened

2004 | Not Threatened

BRIEF DESCRIPTION

Small bushy tree with (usually) 7 thin finely-toothed leaflets in a fan on a long stalk. Flowers in a diffuse cream spray

DISTRIBUTION

Endemic. Widespread. North, South and Stewart Islands.

HABITAT

Lowland to montane forest (sealevel to 1000 m a.s.l.).

FEATURES

Dioecious(?) small tree to 8 m. Trunk irregularly branched; bark greenish, finely ridged and with scattered prominent lenticels. Petioles terete, to 25 cm long, sheathing branchlet, reddish. Petiolules to 2 cm, reddish. Leaves alternate, palmate, with (3)-10 leaflets (us. 7), upper surface evenly green in adult, underside pale, shiny, purplish in juvenile. Terminal leaflet to 20 cm long; lateral leaflets decreasing in size; obovate-cuneate, tip acuminate to obtuse; margins sharply serrate in adult, irregularly lobed to pinnatifid in juvenile. Inflorescence a panicle, axillary (occ. cauline), branches many, spreading, to 35 cm; bracts and bractlets small. Umbels many, up to 10 flowers in each; peduncles subsessile to 10 mm long, pedicels shorter. Flowers greenish cream, c. 7 mm diam. Petals 5(-6), acute. Stamens 5, filaments c. = petals. Style branches 5 (or more), connate below forming an irregular disc. Fruit subglobose, c. 3.5 mm diam., fleshy, dark purple when ripe, containing (5-)7-10(-11) seeds. Seed 2-2.5 mm.



Leaf of *Schefflera digitata*. Photographer: Wayne Bennett



Pate. Photographer: Jeremy Rolfe

SIMILAR TAXA

Vegetatively often confused with *Pseudopanax* species, particularly five-finger (*Pseudopanax arboreus*). The leaflets of *Pseudopanax* species are thicker, smaller, and with larger teeth on the margin.

FLOWERING

February-March

FLOWER COLOURS

Cream, Green

FRUITING

February-March

ETYMOLOGY

schefflera: Named in honour of Jacob Christian Scheffler, an 18th-century German botanist who wrote about *Asarum* (wild ginger).

digitata: Divided into fingers

ATTRIBUTION

Fact sheet prepared by P.J. de Lange for NZPCN (1 June 2013)

CITATION

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MORE INFORMATION

<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/schefflera-digitata/>