Toxicodendron succedaneum

COMMON NAMES
Japanese wax-tree

BIOSTATUS
Exotic

CONSERVATION STATUS
Not applicable

CATEGORY
Vascular

STRUCTURAL CLASS
Trees & Shrubs - Dicotyledons

SIMPLIFIED DESCRIPTION
A large shrub or tree, up to 8 m tall with minute yellowish-green flowers and pale shiny brown fruit.

FLOWER COLOURS
Green, Yellow

DETAILED DESCRIPTION
Dioecious, deciduous, sometimes suckering small tree, up to 8 m tall. Sap poisonous. Leaves alternate, imparipinnate, glabrous, 200-400 mm long (longest at the sapling stage), with 4-6(-7) paired leaflets, and usually 1 terminal leaflet. Leaflets recurved to drooping, 60-80 × 15-25(-30) mm, narrow-ovate to lanceolate, base oblique, apex long-acuminate, dark green to grey green (often suffused with red) above, often glaucous beneath; seedling leaflets strongly toothed, adults entire. Petiole, rachis, veins and undersides of leaves often pink. Inflorescence an axillary panicle, 100-200 mm long; flowers minute, yellowish-green,5-6 mm diam., sepals 5, petals 5, anthers 5. Fruit a fleshy drupe, 7-10 mm diam., globose-ovoid, flattened, smooth, pale shiny brown.



Ellerslie, Auckland. Jul 2007. Photographer: Peter J de Lange, Licence: CC BY-NC.

SIMILAR TAXA
Similar to sumac trees.

DISTRIBUTION
A native of Asia, although it has been planted elsewhere, most notably Australia and New Zealand.

HABITAT
Coastal indigenous vegetation, urban gardens, and wasteland

GENUS
Toxicodendron

FAMILY
Anacardiaceae

AUTHORITY
Toxicodendron succedaneum (L.) Kuntze

SYNONYMS
Rhus succedanea

YEAR NATURALISED
1984

ORIGIN
Himalaya to Japan

REASON FOR INTRODUCTION
Ornamental

TOLERANCES
Cold tolerant.

LIFE CYCLE AND DISPERSAL
Long lived small tree, which repiroduces by seed.(a single seed held within a fleshy drupe). The species is bird dispersed and by gravity.

POISONOUS PLANT
All members of the genus produce the skin-irritating oil urushiol, which can cause a severe allergic reaction. This is called urushiol-induced contact dermatitis (also called Toxicodendron dermatitis and Rhus dermatitis). In most cases rash symptoms appear within 24 hours. If a severe reaction occurs medical attention is needed to prevent damage to the skin. The rash may persist for up to one or two weeks (in some cases up to five weeks). One in four people are likely to experience severe symptoms. Since the skin reaction is an allergic one, people may develop progressively stronger reactions after repeated exposures. Click on this link for more ionformation about poisonous garden plants.

ENVIRONMENTAL WEED (2024)
This plant is named in a list of 386 environmental weeds in New Zealand 2024 prepared by DOC. 759 candidate species were considered for inclusion on this new comprehensive list of environmental weeds in New Zealand. The species considered were drawn from published lists of weed species, lists of plants that must be reported or managed by law if observed, existing national and regional programmes and agreements for pest management, and species already managed by the Department of Conservation (DOC). Candidate species were then assessed to see if they were fully naturalised and whether they have more than minor impacts in natural ecosystems. Read the full report here.

NVS CODE
TOXSUC

MORE INFORMATION
https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/toxicodendron-succedaneum/

PDF DATE
25 May 2026