

Usnea flavocardia

SYNONYMS

Usnea wirthii P.Clerc,

FAMILY

Parmeliaceae

AUTHORITY

Usnea flavocardia Räsänen

FLORA CATEGORY

Lichen – Native

ENDEMIC TAXON

No

ENDEMIC GENUS

No

ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Lichens - Fruticose

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2018 | At Risk – Naturally Uncommon | Qualifiers: DP, SO

BRIEF DESCRIPTION

Characterised by the small shrubby thallus (it is a member of the *U. fragile* agg.); inflated branches, wide, sparse, yellow medulla; thin glossy cortex, sometimes with minute purplish red spots; plane to excavate soralia with granular to isidiose soredia; and two chemodemes (containing either norstictic acid K+ yellow→red; or psoromic acid K–, Pd+ golden-yellow).

DISTRIBUTION

North Island: Wellington (Mt Lees Reserve near Palmerston North, Tararua Ranges, Makara Peak, Wellington City).

South Island: Dunedin. **Chatham Islands.**

Known also from Europe, Western North America, Baja California, Mexico and Chile.

HABITAT

On canopy branches of trees and shrubs in lowland forest and coastal scrub.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Thallus pale-green, erect, to 3 cm long, isotomic dichotomous, moderately branched, branches divergent, with one single point of attachment; trunk concolorous, short, 2 mm long, straight. **Branches** cylindrical, tapering slowly; segments terete, cylindrical to slightly swollen; apices short, finely branching. **Surface** papillate, fibrillose, sorediate; without pseudocyphellae; cortex glossy, often with small red spots (×10 lens) [these may be hard to find under the hand lens and even the dissecting binocular]. **Papillae** verrucose, sparse to abundant, irregularly scattered. **Fibrils** short, 1–2 mm long, spinulose, few to absent, mostly on main and secondary branches. **Soralia** on apices and short branches, originating in cortex or from transverse cracks, superficial to excavate, solitary to confluent; soredia granular to isidiose. **Medulla** thick, very loose to dense, fibrous, yellow. **Axis** thin, straight, solid, yellowish. **Apothecia** rarely present.

Chemistry: Cortex K+ yellow→red, C–, KC+ red, Pd+ golden-yellow; containing usnic, stictic, salazinic, norstictic and/or psoromic acids.

SIMILAR TAXA

Similar to *Usnea cornuta* but separated by its yellow medulla and the presence of red cortical spots (×10 lens).

SUBSTRATE

Corticolous



ATTRIBUTION

Fact sheet prepared by Marley Ford (16 November 2022). Brief description, Distribution, Habitat, Features, and Similar taxa sections copied from Galloway (2007) (as *U. wirthii*).

REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

Galloway D.J. 2007: *Flora of New Zealand: Lichens, including lichen-forming and lichenicolous fungi*. 2nd edition. Lincoln, Manaaki Whenua Press. 2261 pp.

MORE INFORMATION

<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/usnea-flavocardia/>