

# Xeronema callistemon f. callistemon

## COMMON NAME

Poor Knights lily, raupō-Taranga

## SYNONYMS

Xeronema callistemon W.R.B.Oliv., Xeronema callistemon W.R.B.Oliv. var. callistemon

## FAMILY

Xeronemataceae

## AUTHORITY

Xeronema callistemon f. callistemon W.R.B.Oliv.

## FLORA CATEGORY

Vascular – Native

## ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes

## ENDEMIC GENUS

No

## ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

## STRUCTURAL CLASS

Herbs - Monocots

## CHROMOSOME NUMBER

2n = 34, 36

## CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

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

## PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

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

2009 | At Risk – Naturally Uncommon | Qualifiers: IE

2004 | Range Restricted

## DISTRIBUTION

Endemic. Only known from the Poor Knights Islands near Tutukaka, and from Hen (Taranga) Island, near Whangarei. Xeronema belongs to a newly established family of one genus with two species, the Xeronemataceae.

## HABITAT

Rhyolite sea cliffs and rock outcrops. Occasionally in forest on rubble or as an epiphyte on pohtukawa (*Metrosideros excelsa*). These latter occurrences probably stem from fallen plants captured in trees or resprouting on the forest floor.



Western Cliffs. Photographer: Peter J. de Lange, Licence: CC BY-NC.



Xeronema callistemon f. callistemon inflorescence, Ex Cult. Atonagi Island, October 2005,. Photographer: Peter J. de Lange, Licence: CC BY-NC.

## DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Forming huge colonies 1-4 m across. Leaves green to yellow-green, arising from thick rhizomes, and forming flattened fans, 60-150 x 3-5 cm. Dead leaves long persistent, ultimately detached from the frayed base to form a fibrous mass. Inflorescences on green, thick, leafy stems (peduncle) up to 1 m. Racemes 10-60 cm long, aligned vertically on upper side of peduncle. Flowers crowded, numerous. Flower stalks (pedicels) 1-15 mm long, subtended by a pale green translucent leafy bract, which is obviously shorter than the buds. Flowers red, tepals 10-15 mm, outer 3 mm wide, inner 1.5 mm. Stamen filaments twice length of tepals, anthers 4 mm long, pollen tangerine-orange. Ovary 4 x 2 mm, oblong-3-angled, covered with copious nectar. Capsule 9-11 mm. Seeds ovate, 1.6 x 1 mm, black.

## SIMILAR TAXA

None in New Zealand. Similar to *X. moorei* of New Caledonia (the only other species of the genus, and family), which differs in some floral and capsule details, and by the seed size and shape. *X. callistemon* f. *callistemon* differs from f. *bracteosa* only in one character, the much shorter pale green to translucent floral bracts, which are shorter than the emerging flower buds.

## FLOWERING

September to December, peaking in October.

## FLOWER COLOURS

Orange, Red/Pink

## FRUITING

November to January.

## PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

Very easy from divisions of whole plants, and seed. But seed must be fresh, and though germinating easily can take 10-15 years to reach flowering size. *Xeronema* is best grown in a long narrow pot, within a free draining mix of rock chips and compost. Plants should be watered frequently, and frequently fertilised with sea weed, manure, or high phosphate/nitrogen garden fertilisers. They should be allowed to become root bound (or they will not flower), and need high sunlight. Plants are very cold sensitive, dying in even mild frosts.

## THREATS

None. The species is listed only because it is endemic to two very small island archipelago.

## ETYMOLOGY

**xeronema:** From the Greek xeros 'dry' and nema 'thread'

**callistemon:** With a beautiful stamen

## WHERE TO BUY

Becoming more common in cultivation, and easily obtained from most garden centres.

## ATTRIBUTION

Fact Sheet prepared for NZPCN by P.J. de Lange 1 October 2004. Description based on Moore & Edgar (1970) supplemented by observations obtained from fresh specimens and herbarium material (see also de Lange & Cameron 1999).

## REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

de Lange, P.J.; Cameron, E.K. 1999: The vascular flora of Aorangi Island, Poor Knights Islands, northern New Zealand. *New Zealand Journal of Botany* 37: 433-468.

Moore, L.B.; Edgar, E. 1970: Flora of New Zealand. Vol. II. Wellington, Government Printer.

Oliver, W.R.B. 1926: New Zealand angiosperms. *Transactions and Proceedings of the New Zealand Institute* 56: 1-5.

Oliver, H. 1968. Note on the growing of *Xeronema callistemon*. *Wellington Botanical Society Bulletin* 35: 22

## NZPCN FACT SHEET CITATION

Please cite as: de Lange, P.J. (Year at time of access): *Xeronema callistemon* f. *callistemon* Fact Sheet (content continuously updated). New Zealand Plant Conservation Network.

<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/xeronema-callistemon-f-callistemon/> (Date website was queried)

#### MORE INFORMATION

<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/xeronema-callistemon-f-callistemon/>