

Epacris sinclairii

COMMON NAMES

Sinclair's tamingi

BIOSTATUS

Native

CATEGORY

Vascular

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Trees & Shrubs - Dicotyledons

SIMPLIFIED DESCRIPTION

Bushy woody shrub with small hard leaves 7-15mm long by 2-5mm wide inhabiting upland Coromandel and Great Barrier Island. Leaves distinctly widest at middle, with three darker green lines on underside, with a small pale knob at tip. Flowers white, solitary in the base of leaves but many per twig.

FLOWER COLOURS

Red/Pink, White

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Stout, erect, bushy, usually spreading shrub or small tree 1-8 x 1-3 m. Basal trunk stout, up to 100 mm dbh; bark grey-brown, flaking in long strips. Branches numerous, very leafy, virgate, spreading, minutely hairy when young, becoming glabrescent. Leaves ascending, patent to sub patent, close-set, firmly coriaceous, 7-15(-20) x 2-5(-8) mm, broadly lanceolate to ovate, rhomboidal-ovate to oblong-ovate; apex obtuse, often terminating in a distinctive cream-coloured or pale-green knob (never acuminate or mucronate); veins obscure on upper side, distinct on underside, bright green to bronze-green above, paler beneath. Flowers axillary, solitary, often aggregated toward branchlet tips. Peduncles 2-2.5 mm long. Corolla 5-8 mm diameter, white, lobes 5, spreading, broad-oblong, obtuse. Stamens 5, filaments, inserted on corolla tube, anthers red-brown to black, scarcely exerted. Capsules 1.5-2.5 mm long, subglobose, 5-lobed.

SIMILAR TAXA

Rather similar to *Epacris pauciflora* A.Rich. (swamp tamingi) which differs mainly by its strongly erect, never spreading, sparingly branched "pitch fork" growth form, smaller over all stature (rarely exceeding 2 m in height), and smaller, dark green to red-green rhomboidal, acuminate to mucronate leaves. There are no major floral, fruit or seed differences. *E. pauciflora* is a species of gumland scrub and peat bogs, which does not grow in forest or on rhyolite rock outcrops. On Great Barrier Island and in the upper Kauaerange Valley both species are locally sympatric.

DISTRIBUTION

Endemic. North Island. Great Barrier Island where it is confined to the Central Mount Hobson Massif, and the Coromandel Peninsula, where it is only known from the Upper Kauaeranga Valley.

HABITAT

A rhyolite endemic, preferring cloud Forest (where it can be epiphytic) and associated rock tors. On Great Barrier Island, due to past forest logging and associated land clearance plants have also colonised gumland scrub and other open, impoverished clay pans.

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2023 | At Risk – Naturally Uncommon | Qualifiers: RR



Perrys Hill, Great Barrier Island. Photographer: Gillian M. Crowcroft, Licence: All rights reserved.



Table Mountain (Whakairi), Coromandel. Photographer: Cynthia Roberts, Date taken: 01/02/2010, Licence: CC BY-SA.

THREATS

Threatened by the heavily reduced habitat the species now occupies. In the few locations where it is known it is regenerating freely.

DETAILED TAXONOMY

FAMILY

Ericaceae

AUTHORITY

Epacris sinclairii Hook f.

SYNONYMS

Epacris pauciflora var. *sinclairii* (Hook.f.) Cheeseman

TAXONOMIC NOTES

Epacris sinclairii is ecological and morphological distinct from *E. pauciflora* with which it is broadly sympatric on Great Barrier Island, and in the upper Kauaeranga Valley. Limited nrDNA ITS sequence data (unpublished, University of Auckland) indicate only a minimal difference between *E. sinclairii* and *E. pauciflora* (a single base pair change).

ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes

ENDEMIC GENUS

No

ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

ECOLOGY

FLOWERING

Mainly April - though occasional flowers may be seen in September-October

FRUITING

Mainly May-July

LIFE CYCLE AND DISPERSAL

Minute seeds are wind dispersed (Thorsen et al., 2009).

PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

Difficult. Should not be removed from the wild.

OTHER INFORMATION

ETYMOLOGY

epacris: From the Greek *epi* 'upon' and *akros* 'the top', referring these plants' habitat being on high ground

sinclairii: After Sinclair (c. 1796–1861). Colonial Secretary and naturalist.

CHROMOSOME NUMBER

2n = 26

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2017 | At Risk – Naturally Uncommon | Qualifiers: RR

2012 | At Risk – Naturally Uncommon | Qualifiers: RR

2009 | At Risk – Naturally Uncommon | Qualifiers: RC

2004 | Threatened – Nationally Endangered

REFERENCING AND CITATIONS

REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

Thorsen, M. J.; Dickinson, K. J. M.; Seddon, P. J. 2009. Seed dispersal systems in the New Zealand flora. *Perspectives in Plant Ecology, Evolution and Systematics* 11: 285-309

ATTRIBUTION

Fact Sheet prepared for NZPCN by P.J. de Lange 15 October 2005. Description by P.J. de Lange.

NZPCN FACT SHEET CITATION

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MORE INFORMATION

<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/epacris-sinclairii/>

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16 October 2024