

Lepidothamnus laxifolius

COMMON NAMES

pygmy pine

BIOSTATUS

Native – Endemic taxon

CATEGORY

Vascular

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Trees & Shrubs - Gymnosperms

FLOWER COLOURS

No flowers

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Dioecious or monoecious, sprawling shrub. **Branches** 2–5(-10) mm diameter towards base, up to 1 m long or more; branchlets numerous, very slender, flexuous. **Foliage** polymorphic; juveniles 5–12 mm. long, subulate to narrow-linear, acute, flat, often curved; later leaves lessening to 2–3 mm long (often flowering and fruiting in this stage); fully adult leaves 1–2 mm long, appressed, imbricating, oblong-ovate, obtuse, keeled; branchlets often showing a mixture of leaf-forms. **Male strobili** solitary, terminal, sessile, up to 8 mm. long; apiculus broadly triangular, acute. **Female cones** may be found on the same plant as male strobili. **Ovule** solitary, terminal. **Receptacle** swollen, red/crimson, succulent, rarely dry. **Seed** 3–5 mm. long, black, nutlike, oblong-cylindrical, obtuse, with stout, curved apiculus, far exserted beyond epimatium.

SIMILAR TAXA

Manoao colensoi is a much larger plant.

Lepidothamnus intermedius is generally a larger plant, yet may occur in dwarf-form, a much stouter less flexible plant. Both species can be seen growing side by side. Occasionally seen as a hybrid between *L.*

intermedius and *L. laxifolius* which can make identification very difficult until one is very familiar with all the parent species (illustrated in Wilson & Galloway, 1993).

DISTRIBUTION

Endemic. New Zealand: North Island, (Coromandel Range, Raukumara Range, Te Uruwera through the Central Volcanic Plateau and Kaingaroa Plain south in a patchy distribution to Ruahine Range), South Island (mostly west of main divide from Kahurangi Range south to Fiordland), and Stewart Island.

HABITAT

Montane and subalpine, rarely lower alpine, shrubland and open scrub, usually on wet ground.

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2023 | Not Threatened

[Jump to previous conservation statuses](#)

DETAILED TAXONOMY

FAMILY

Podocarpaceae

AUTHORITY

Lepidothamnus laxifolius (Hook.f.) Quinn



Caples Valley. Photographer: John Barkla, Date taken: 01/03/2013, Licence: CC BY.



McKellar Saddle. Photographer: John Barkla, Licence: CC BY.

SYNONYMS

Dacrydium laxifolium Hook.f.

ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes

ENDEMIC GENUS

No

ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

ECOLOGY

FLOWERING

Male cone: October-December

FRUITING

February-April

LIFE CYCLE AND DISPERSAL

Arrilate seeds are dispersed by frugivory (Thorsen et al., 2009).

WETLAND PLANT INDICATOR STATUS RATING

FAC: Facultative

Commonly occurs as either a hydrophyte or non-hydrophyte (non-wetlands).

OTHER INFORMATION

ETYMOLOGY

lepidothamnus: From the Greek lepidos 'scale' & thamnus 'crowded or close set'

laxifolius: Soft-leaved

NVS CODE

LEPLAX

CHROMOSOME NUMBER

2n = 30

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2017 | Not Threatened

2012 | Not Threatened

2009 | Not Threatened

2004 | Not Threatened

[Jump to current conservation status](#)

REGIONAL CONSERVATION STATUSES

Otago: 2024 | Regionally Not Threatened Help

The regional threat classification system leverages off the national assessments in the NZTCS, providing information relevant for the regional context. Otago conservation status information is sourced from the "[Regional conservation status of indigenous vascular plants in Otago](#)" Jarvie S et al. (2024) report.

REFERENCING AND CITATIONS

REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

Allan, H. H. 1961. Flora of New Zealand. Vol. 1. Wellington: Government Printer. Page 110-111.

Thorsen MJ, Dickinson KJM, Seddon PJ. 2009. Seed dispersal systems in the New Zealand flora. *Perspectives in Plant Ecology, Evolution and Systematics* 11: 285–309. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ppees.2009.06.001>.

Wilson, H.D. and Galloway, T., 1993. Small-leaved shrubs of New Zealand. Christchurch: Manuka Press. Pages 253-254.

ATTRIBUTION

Fact sheet prepared for NZPCN by M.D. Ward (12 April 2024). Description from Allan (1961), Wilson & Galloway (1993).

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MORE INFORMATION

<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/lepidothamnus-laxifolius/>

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