

# Myrsine australis

## COMMON NAME

red mapou, red matipo, mapau, red maple

## SYNONYMS

*Suttonia australis* Richard, *Myrsine urvillei* A.DC., *Rapanea australis* (Richard) W.R.B.Oliv.

## FAMILY

Primulaceae

## AUTHORITY

*Myrsine australis* (A.Rich.) Allan

## FLORA CATEGORY

Vascular – Native

## ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes

## ENDEMIC GENUS

No

## ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

## STRUCTURAL CLASS

Trees & Shrubs - Dicotyledons

## NVS CODE

MYRAUS

## CHROMOSOME NUMBER

2n = 46

## CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2017 | Not Threatened

## PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2012 | Not Threatened

2009 | Not Threatened

2004 | Not Threatened

## BRIEF DESCRIPTION

Common tall bushy shrub with bright red twigs bearing wavy yellow-green leaves. Leaves 3-6cm long, with an undulating edge. Flowers small, in clusters. Fruit almost black.

## DISTRIBUTION

Endemic. Three Kings, North, South and Stewart Islands.

## HABITAT

Common tree of regenerating and mature forest in coastal to montane situations. Often common on northern offshore islands.

## WETLAND PLANT INDICATOR STATUS RATING

FACU: Facultative Upland

Occasionally is a hydrophyte but usually occurs in uplands (non-wetlands).



Fruit. Photographer: Wayne Bennett, Licence: CC BY-NC.



Mapou. Photographer: Wayne Bennett, Licence: CC BY-NC.

## DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Shrub or small tree up 6 m tall. Trunk stout, 0.2-0.6 m diam. Bark dark black or purple-black, red on younger branches. Branchlets numerous erect to spreading, very leafy. Petioles stout, fleshy, 5 mm long, often red or green mottled red. Leaves 30-60 x 15-25 mm, dark green to yellow-green variously mottled or blotched with red, or purple spots, leathery, glabrous except for finely pubescent mid vein, obovate-oblong to broad-elliptic, apex obtuse, margins entire, strongly undulate, rarely flat. Inflorescence a fascicle, usually numerous and crowded, produced along branchlets and in leaf axils. Fixed female and inconstant male flowers on different plants, 1.5-2.5 mm diam., white, cream or pale green. Pedicels short, stout, dark red or purple-black. Calyx-lobes 4, sometimes heavily reduced, long persistent. Petals 4, lanceolate, obtuse, free, revolute. Fruit a 1-seeded drupe, 2-3 mm diam., purple-black to black when mature.

## SIMILAR TAXA

Distinguished from all other New Zealand Myrsine by the small, purple/wine-red blotched or spotted, strongly undulating obovate-oblong to broad-elliptic leaves.

## FLOWERING

August - January

## FLOWER COLOURS

Cream, White

## FRUITING

September - May

## PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

Easy from fresh seed. Can be grown from semi-hardwood cuttings but tricky. Best results are obtained using a mist unit.

## ETYMOLOGY

**myrsine:** Myrrh

**australis:** Southern

## WHERE TO BUY

Occasionally cultivated. Easily grown in a wide range of habitats, making an ideal hedge or small specimen tree. Sometimes available from mainline commercial nurseries, and commonly sold by specialist native plant nurseries.

## KEYSTONE IMPORTANCE

One of three known hosts for Adams mistletoe (*Trilepidea adamsii*).

## ATTRIBUTION

Fact Sheet Prepared for NZPCN by: P.J. de Lange 28 October 2009. Description based on Allan (1961)

## REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

Allan, H.H. 1961: Flora of New Zealand. Vol. I. Wellington, Government Printer.

## NZPCN FACT SHEET CITATION

Please cite as: de Lange, P.J. (Year at time of access): Myrsine australis Fact Sheet (content continuously updated). New Zealand Plant Conservation Network. <https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/myrsine-australis/> (Date website was queried)

## MORE INFORMATION

<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/myrsine-australis/>