Phyllocladus trichomanoides

COMMON NAMES
tānekaha, celery pine

BIOSTATUS
Native – Endemic taxon

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS
2023 | Not Threatened
Jump to previous conservation statuses

CATEGORY
Vascular

STRUCTURAL CLASS
Trees & Shrubs - Gymnosperms

FLOWER COLOURS
No flowers

DETAILED DESCRIPTION
Monoecious tree up to 25 m, trunk up to 1 m diameter; phylloclades alternate, pinnately arranged on whorled rhachides up to 300 mm long. **Leaves** of juveniles up to 20 mm long, narrow-linear, deciduous; of adults much smaller. **Phylloclades** 10–15 per rhachis, irregularly and broadly rhomboid, flabellately lobed, cuneate at base; lobes obtuse to truncate, margins minutely crenulate; leaf-denticles small, subulate, 1.5–3.0 mm long, up to 1.5 mm wide. **Male strobili** terminal in clusters of 5–10, pedicels 3–10 mm long; staminal portion c. 10 mm long, apiculus small, triquetrous; carpidia rather thick, marginal on reduced final phylloclades up to 30 mm long, in clusters of 6–8; seeds nutlike, exserted beyond white, fleshy, irregularly crenulate cupule, c. 3 mm long.

SIMILAR TAXA
Tānekaha is distinguished from mountain toatoa (*Phyllocladus alpinus*) by the phylloclades which are pinnately arranged on rhachis and from toatoa (*P. toatoa*) by the seeds which arranged singly on the margins of phylloclades.

DISTRIBUTION
Endemic. New Zealand: North Island (widespread from Te Paki to about the northern Manawatū, after which it is scarce) and South Island (confined to the Marlborough Sounds, northern Richmond Range and North-west Nelson from Puponga south to about Kahurangi Light and across to Abel Tasman National Park.

HABITAT
Found from sea level to c.1000 m a.s.l. tānekaha is a common tree in northern New Zealand where it is often found growing in association with kauri (*Agathis australis*) on ridge lines. Tānekaha is also common in secondary regrowth forest overlying poorly draining and/or infertile soils. It can be very common in reverting fire-induced gumland scrub. In the central North Island tānekaha-dominated forest is locally common overlying ignimbrite rock and this forest type is very much a feature of the northern Taupo - King Country - Atiamuri area where extensive tānekaha-dominated forests are present overlying such high aspect ratio ignimbrites as the Whakamaru Ignimbrite. Further south tānekaha is rarely such a major component of the forest canopy.

Catkins of Phyllocladus trichomanoides. Photographer: Wayne Bennett, Licence: CC BY-NC.

Phylloclades. Tokatoka Hill, Northland. Photographer: Jeremy R. Rolfe, Date taken: 17/07/2006, Licence: CC BY.

GENUS
Phyllocladus

FAMILY
Phyllocladaceae

AUTHORITY
Phyllocladus trichomanoides D.Don

SYNONYMS
Phyllocladus trichomanoides D.Don var. trichomanoides, Phyllocladus rhomboidalis A.Rich.

TAXONOMIC NOTES
A distinct as yet undescribed species allied to *Phyllocladus trichomanoides* is known from the 120-ha exsposure of ultramafic rock at North Cape, Te Paki. This unnamed species differs from *P. trichomanoides* by its shorter stature and spreading growth habit, longer phyllodes, larger fruits and longer fruiting season. It still awaits formal description. In the past this form had been referred to the hybrid *P. toatoa* × *P. trichomanoides*. However *Phyllocladus toatoa* is not known from Te Paki and the North Cape tree comes true from seed.

ENDEMIC TAXON
Yes

ENDEMIC GENUS
No

ENDEMIC FAMILY
No

FLOWERING
September–December

FRUITING
January–April

PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE
Easily grown from fresh seed. Seedlings transplant well and this species is sometimes common in cultivation. It is often grown as a specimen tree in parks and does well in urban areas on street side verges. Once established tānekaha is able to tolerate full light and considerable drought but young plants do better planted in a less exposed site or at least provided with plenty of water during their early stages of establishment.

WETLAND PLANT INDICATOR STATUS RATING
FACU: Facultative Upland
Occasionally is a hydrophyte but usually occurs in uplands (non-wetlands).

ETYMOLOGY
phyllocladus: Leaf branch, referring to the leaf-like stems
trichomanoides: Fern-like

NVS CODE
PHYTRI

CHROMOSOME NUMBER
2n = 18

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES
2017 | Not Threatened
2012 | Not Threatened
2009 | Not Threatened
2004 | Not Threatened
Jump to current conservation status

REGIONAL CONSERVATION STATUSES

Auckland: 2025 | Regionally Not Threatened | Qualifiers: DPS, DPT Help
Current regional threat status assessments prepared according to Crisp et al. (2025) are displayed when available. The Auckland conservation status information is sourced from the "Conservation status of vascular plant species in Tāmaki Makaurau / Auckland" Simpkins E et al. (2025) report.
Northland: 2026 | Regionally Not Threatened Help
Current regional threat status assessments prepared according to Crisp et al. (2025) are displayed when available. The Northland conservation status information is sourced from the "Conservation status of indigenous vascular plants in Northland | Taitokerau" Ford et al. 2026 report.

REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

Allan HH. 1961. Flora of New Zealand, Volume I. Indigenous Tracheophyta: Psilopsida, Lycopsida, Filicopsida, Gymnospermae, Dicotyledones. Government Printer, Wellington, NZ. 1085 p.

ATTRIBUTION

Fact sheet prepared for NZPCN by P.J. de Lange 1 August 2004. Description adapted from Allan (1961).
Some of this factsheet information is derived from Flora of New Zealand Online and is used under a Creative Commons Attribution 3.0 New Zealand licence.

MORE INFORMATION

https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/phyllocladus-trichomanoides/

PDF DATE

25 August 2026