Pittosporum huttonianum

COMMON NAMES
Hutton's kōhūhū

BIOSTATUS
Native

CATEGORY
Vascular

STRUCTURAL CLASS
Trees & Shrubs - Dicotyledons

SIMPLIFIED DESCRIPTION
Small tree with silvery fuzzy young parts and dark green shiny leathery leaves that are paler underneath and 1.5-2cm wide capsules. Flowers red, with silvery fuzzy base. fruit splitting into three to show the black seeds in a yellowish pith.

FLOWER COLOURS
Red/Pink, Violet/Purple

Kauaeranga valley, November. Photographer: John Smith-Dodsworth, Licence: CC BY-NC.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION
Gynodioecious, small, broad crowned trees up to 10 m tall. Trunk stout, grey-balck to brown, lenticillate. Branches spreading. Branchlets dark brown, at first covered with floccose white, white-grey to faintly fulvous tomentum, glabrate. leaves alternate, crowded toward branchlet apices. Petioles 5-15 x 1-3 mm, at first covered with appressed white tomentum, soon glabrate. Leaf buds copiously covered with white, white-grey or faintly fulvous tomentum. Lamina 40-120 x 20-60 mm, dark green above paler beneath, elliptic-oblong, obovate-oblong, apex and base acute to obtuse, margins entire, undulate or revolute emergent leaves copiously covered with white, floccose tomentum, soon glabrate. Flowers terminal, axillary or soliatry, usually in (1-)2-4-flowered fascicles; pedicels up to 20 mm long, accrescent in fruit, white-tomentose, usually subtended by 1 or more cataphylls and 2-10 mm long, caducous, tomentulose or glabrous bud scales. Sepals 6-9 x 2-3 mm, oblong, acute, outer surface covered with floccose white tomentum, inner glabrous. Petals 12-18 x 3-4.5 mm, red, margenta, purple or white, oblanceolate, linear-oblanceolate, obtuse to subacute, free from base, recurved from about the middle; stamens 6-10 mm, anthers 1.5-4.5 x 0.8-1.5 mm. Ovary 2.5-5 x 1-3.5 mm, copiously white-tomentose; style 2-5.5. mm long, stigma capitate or truncate. Capsules 12-20 mm diameter, (2-)3-valved, trigonous, apiculate, coriaceous to woody, at first white-tomentose soon glabrate, somewhat rugose. Mucilage orange to orange-red. Seeds 16-25, reddish-black to black, of irregular shape.

SIMILAR TAXA
By and large a well marked species, distinguished from other New Zealand large-leaved Pittosporum by the elliptic-oblong, obovate-oblong leaves, and capsules which are initially rather generously covered in distinctive white to fulvous floccose tomentum. However, it grades into P. ellipticum around the Karangahake Gorge, where the chief distinction is the presence (sparsely in this area) of floccose white - fulvous rather than rust-brown tomentum. In the western Waikato it appears to grade into P. colensoi Hook.f., from which, again the chief difference is the copious floccose tomentum, which is otherwise absent in the sparsely hairy leaves of P. tenuifolium subsp. colensoi. Also the latter entity is a more upright tree, while P. huttonianum tends to have a broader, more spreading crown. In some areas the distinction is rather arbitrary caused perhaps by hybridism. Further study into the matter is desired.

DISTRIBUTION
Endemic. North Island, Great Barrier Island, and the Coromandel Peninsula to about the Karangahake Gorge in the east. Also present from Te Akau south to about the Tawarau Forest in the western Waikato.

HABITAT
Coastal to lower montane (1-700 m a.s.l.). Common in regenerating forest, or along ridge lines, on cliff tops, along slip scars, rock tors and in limestone country fringing razorbacks and dolines (tomo) shafts. Rarely as a sparse understorey component of mature forest.

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS
2023 | At Risk – Naturally Uncommon

DETAILED TAXONOMY

FAMILY
Pittosporaceae

AUTHORITY
Pittosporum huttonianum Kirk

SYNONYMS
Pittosporum huttonianum Kirk var. huttonianum, Pittosporum huttonianum var. fasciatum Kirk

TAXONOMIC NOTES
In parts of its range this species appears to grade with P. colensoi and P. tenuifolium. Many botanists informally regard P. huttonianum as a subspecies of P. tenuifolium. Further research into its status, perhaps by using an appropriate range of molecular markers might clarify it status. NZPCN retain the species because for most of its range it is a well marked species and in that range it is often sympatric with P. tenuifolium.

ENDEMIC TAXON
Yes

ENDEMIC GENUS
No

ENDEMIC FAMILY
No

ECOLOGY

FLOWERING
October - November

FRUITING
November - October (fruit present throughout the year)

PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE
Easily grown from fresh seed. An attractive small tree for a small garden. Rather tolerant of a range of conditions.

OTHER INFORMATION

ETYMOLOGY
pittosporum: Pitch seed

NVS CODE
PITHUT

CHROMOSOME NUMBER
2n = 24

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2017 | At Risk – Naturally Uncommon
2012 | At Risk – Naturally Uncommon
2009 | Not Threatened
2004 | Not Threatened

REFERENCING AND CITATIONS

REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

Cooper, R.C. 1956: The Australian and New Zealand species of Pittosporum. Annals of the Missouri Botanical Garden 43: 87-188

ATTRIBUTION

Fact sheet prepared for NZPCN by P.J. de Lange 30 August 2006. Description adapted from Cooper (1956).

NZPCN FACT SHEET CITATION

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

MORE INFORMATION

https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/pittosporum-huttonianum/

PDF DATE

03 October 2024