

Plagianthus regius subsp. regius

COMMON NAMES

mānatu, ribbonwood, lowland ribbonwood

BIOSTATUS

Native – Endemic taxon

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2023 | Not Threatened

[Jump to previous conservation statuses](#)

CATEGORY

Vascular

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Trees & Shrubs - Dicotyledons

SIMPLIFIED DESCRIPTION

Tall tree with soft jagged pointed leaves and long sprays of tiny yellowish flowers and small green fruit that fall as a unit. Wood soft. Leaves 3-7.5cm long, much wider at base. Juveniles with tangled twigs bearing shorter rounded leaves with blunt bases.

FLOWER COLOURS

Green

SIMILAR TAXA

Plagianthus regius subsp. chathamicus is very similar. It is endemic to the Chatham Islands and differs only from subsp. regius by the complete lack of the filiramate, divaricating juvenile growth habit typical of subsp. regius. Both subspecies are now present in New Zealand proper, and subsp. chathamicus is now often sold from garden centres as *P. regius*. So look for the divaricating growth habit if you want to ensure you have the appropriate plant for your area.

DISTRIBUTION

Endemic. New Zealand: North, South and Stewart Islands

HABITAT

Coastal to lower montane. Often a prominent tree in lowland alluvial forest.

GENUS

Plagianthus

FAMILY

Malvaceae

AUTHORITY

Plagianthus regius (Poit.) Hochr. subsp. *regius*

SYNONYMS

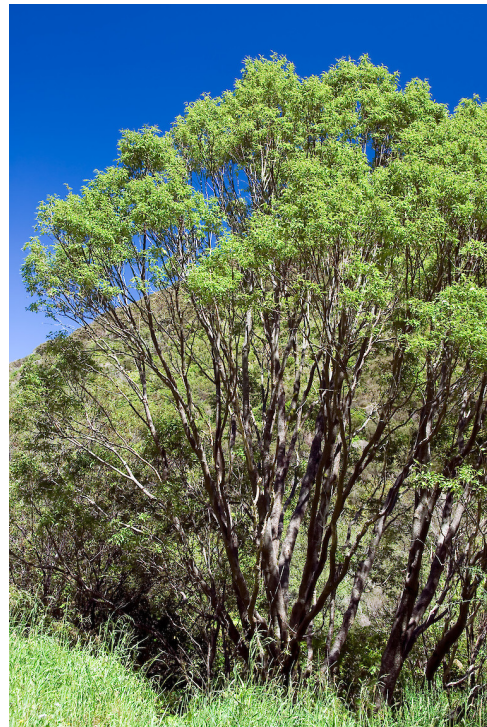
Philippodendrum regium Poiteau, *Plagianthus betulinus* A.Cunn., *Plagianthus betulinus* A.Cunn. var. *betulinus*, *Plagianthus urticinus* A.Cunn.

ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes

ENDEMIC GENUS

Yes



Remutaka Rail Trail. Photographer: Jeremy R. Rolfe, Date taken: 02/12/2006, Licence: CC BY.



Foliage of *Plagianthus regius*. Photographer: John Smith-Dodsworth, Licence: CC BY-NC.

ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

FLOWERING

September - November

PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

Easily grown from fresh seed. However, seed is often difficult to obtain because it is usually damaged by insects. A very fast growing tree which is an excellent specimen tree for a large garden or park. Does well in most situations but prefers a fertile, moist but free draining soil.

WETLAND PLANT INDICATOR STATUS RATING

FACU: Facultative Upland

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

ETYMOLOGY

plagianthus: Oblique or lop-sided flower (petals uneven at the base)

regius: Royal

NVS CODE

PLARSR

CHROMOSOME NUMBER

2n = 42

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 Threatened – Regionally Endangered | Qualifiers: DPS, DPT, PF, RR, RF Help
The regional threat classification system leverages off the national assessments in the NZTCS, providing information relevant for the regional context. Auckland conservation status information is sourced from the “[Conservation status of vascular plant species in Tāmaki Makaurau / Auckland](#)” Simpkins E et al. (2025) report.

Otago: 2025 | 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 “[Conservation Status of Indigenous Vascular Plants in Otago, 2025](#)” Jarvie S et al. (2025) report.

REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

[Wilcox, M.D. 2002. Lowland ribbonwood *Plagianthus regius* at Clevedon. Auckland Botanical Society Journal, 57: 144-146](#)

MORE INFORMATION

<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/plagianthus-regius-subsp-regius/>

PDF DATE

25 May 2026