

Pseudopanax arboreus

COMMON NAMES

fivefinger, five finger, whauwhaupaku

SYNONYMS

Panax arboreus Murray, *Panax arboreus* Murray var. *arboreus*, *Neopanax arboreus* (Murray) Philipson var. *arboreus*, *Pseudopanax arboreus* (Murray) Philipson

FAMILY

Araliaceae

AUTHORITY

Pseudopanax arboreus (L.f.) Allan

FLORA CATEGORY

Vascular – Native

ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes

ENDEMIC GENUS

Yes

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Trees & Shrubs - Dicotyledons

NVS CODE

PSEARB

CHROMOSOME NUMBER

2n = 48

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2017 | Not Threatened

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2012 | Not Threatened

2009 | Not Threatened

2004 | Not Threatened

SIMPLIFIED DESCRIPTION

Small bushy tree with glossy green fleshy toothed leaves arranged in fans of 5 (occ. up to 7) leaflets. Fruit purple, in obvious clusters

DISTRIBUTION

Endemic. Widespread (though rare in Central Otago). North and South Islands

HABITAT

Coastal to montane (10-750 m a.s.l.). Moist broadleaf forest. Frequently epiphytic. A frequent component of secondary forest. Streamsides and forest margins.

WETLAND PLANT INDICATOR STATUS RATING

UPL: Obligate Upland

Rarely is a hydrophyte, almost always in uplands (non-wetlands).



Stokes Valley, Lower Hutt. Photographer: Jeremy R. Rolfe, Date taken: 12/08/2001, Licence: CC BY.



Stokes Valley, Lower Hutt. Photographer: Jeremy R. Rolfe, Date taken: 05/03/2005, Licence: CC BY.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Us. Dioecious. Small multi-branched tree to 8 m tall, branches and branchlets brittle. Leaves alternate, leaflets 5-7 (us. 5), palmate. Petioles c. 15-20 cm long, sheathing branchlet at base. Petiolules c. 3-5 cm long, pale green. Leaflets obovate-oblong to oblong-cuneate, thinly coriaceous, coarsely serrate-dentate, acute or acuminate to obtuse; midveins and main lateral veins obvious above and below; terminal lamina 10-20 x 4-7 cm. Inflorescence and panicle, terminal, compound; flowers usually unisexual; 8-20 primary rays (branchlets), up to 10 cm long; 15-20 secondary rays; umbellules with 10-15 flowers in each. Calyx truncate or obscurely 5-toothed; flowers c. 5 mm diam., sweet-scented; petals 5, white to pink flushed, ovate to triangular, acute; stamens 5, obvious, filaments c. = petals; ovary 2-loculed, each containing 1(-2) ovules; style branches 2, spreading. Fruit fleshy, 5-8 mm diam., style branches retained on an apical disc, very dark purple, laterally compressed. Seeds 2(-3) per fruit, wrinkled, 3-6 mm long.

SIMILAR TAXA

Similar to other *Pseudopanax* species, but has a greater number of leaflets borne on distinct petiolules. Vegetatively similar to *Schefflera digitata* (pate) which has thinner, finely serrate and larger leaflets with usually 7 leaflets per leaf.

FLOWERING

June to August

FLOWER COLOURS

Red/Pink, White

FRUITING

August to February

PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

Easy from fresh, cleaned, seed

THREATS

Not Threatened. In places the petiolules of *Pseudopanax arboreus* (and other fleshy-leaved *Pseudopanax* species) are a conspicuous element of possum (*Trichosurus vulpecula*) diet and the forest floor can become littered with discarded leaflets.

ETYMOLOGY

pseudopanax: False cure

arboreus: From the Latin arbor 'tree', meaning tree-like

TAXONOMIC NOTES

This species was transferred back to *Neopanax* Allan by: Frodin, D.G.; Govaerts, R. 2003: World Checklist and Bibliography of Araliaceae, The Cromwell Press, European Union.

ATTRIBUTION

Description adapted from Allan (1961) and Webb and Simpson (2001).

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REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

Allan, H.H. 1961. Flora of NZ, Vol. I. Government Printer, Wellington

Webb, C.J. & Simpson, M.J.A. 2001. Seeds of NZ gymnosperms and dicotyledons. Manuka Press, Christchurch.

NZPCN FACT SHEET CITATION

Please cite as: de Lange, P.J. (Year at time of access): *Pseudopanax arboreus* Fact Sheet (content continuously updated). New Zealand Plant Conservation Network.

<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/pseudopanax-arboreus/> (Date website was queried)

MORE INFORMATION

<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/pseudopanax-arboreus/>

PDF DATE

17 September 2024