

Ripogonum scandens

COMMON NAMES

supplejack, kareao, pirita

SYNONYMS

Smilax ripogonum Forst.f.

FAMILY

Ripogonaceae

AUTHORITY

Ripogonum scandens J.R.Forst. et G.Forst.

FLORA CATEGORY

Vascular – Native

ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes

ENDEMIC GENUS

No

ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Lianes - Monocots

NVS CODE

RIPSCA

CHROMOSOME NUMBER

$2n = 30$

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2017 | Not Threatened

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2012 | Not Threatened

2009 | Not Threatened

2004 | Not Threatened

DISTRIBUTION

Endemic. North, South, Stewart and Chatham Islands

HABITAT

Coastal to montane. Usually in forest but occasionally in swamps (where it sprawls through flax and fern), and common in karst country where it often grows in doline, tomo and cave entrances

WETLAND PLANT INDICATOR STATUS RATING

FACU: Facultative Upland

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



Rangaika, Chatham Island. Photographer: Jeremy R. Rolfe, Date taken: 01/06/2013, Licence: CC BY.



Stokes Valley, Lower Hutt. Photographer: Jeremy R. Rolfe, Date taken: 21/06/2015, Licence: CC BY.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Woody, evergreen, twining forest liane. Rhizome horizontal, stout, lignaceous, usually swollen into a woody tuber 30–60 mm diameter at base of erect stem. Stems of two kinds: (a) twining stems growing upward from mature rhizome on forest floor, without green lvs, succulent at tip; these are several metres long, c.15–20 mm diameter, little branched, almost black, finely pubescent; nodes c.100–200 mm apart, thickened; sheathing scale leaves alternate, subopposite or opposite, membranous, 10–30 mm long, charcoal black, narrowly deltoid, finely brown-scabrid, caducous. (b) non-twining stems arising from the long stems in full light; these are to 1 m long, c.5 mm diameter, more branched and widely spreading, light brown, glabrous; internodes shorter, the distal ones bearing green leaves and inflorescences. Leaves mostly opposite, 55–160(–230) × 20–60(–80) mm, green, dark green or yellow-green, ± coriaceous, narrow-ovate to oblong, narrowed rather abruptly to tip, margins entire and ± undulate; petiole c.10–15 mm long, ± channelled. Inflorescence axillary or terminal, simple or compound, 100–150(–280) mm long; bracts usually all small and membranous, rarely foliaceous. Pedicels c.5–9 mm long, without bracteole at base but with one or more adjacent to and resembling perianth-segs. Flowers not crowded. Tepals green often hyaline green, minute, free, spreading. Stamens much > tepals; filaments c.2 mm long; anthers greenish, yellow or cream, linear-oblong, c.3.0–5.0 × 1.0–1.5 mm, dehiscing laterally by long slits. Ovary globose, c.1.5 mm diameter; ovules 2 per locule, attached about mid-level; style 2 mm long, including stigma of 3 verrucose lobes. Fruit globose, bright red, c.10–15 mm diameter, pericarp thin, fleshy, tightly stretched over 1–2(–3) hard, spotted seeds, seed when single almost spherical. Fruit falling, 12–15 months after flowering, by abscission layer just above perianth.

SIMILAR TAXA

None

FLOWERING

October - May

FLOWER COLOURS

Green, Yellow

FRUITING

Throughout the year

PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

Easily grown from fresh fruit. Does best when planted in a moist soil within a shade site in a place where the vines can grow up into the sun.

ETYMOLOGY

ripogonum: Pliant shoots with kneed joints

scandens: Climbing; from the Latin scandere; growth habit

CULTIVATION

Occasionally available from specialist native plant nurseries.

CULTURAL USE/IMPORTANCE

The supple, flexuous and pliant but incredibly strong stems were the preferred medium from which Māori made hinaki (eel traps). In earlier times, supplejack was the favoured source for canes for use in New Zealand schools.

ATTRIBUTION

Description adapted from Moore & Edgar (1970). Fact sheet prepared for NZPCN by P.J. de Lange 14 February 2011. 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.

REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

Moore, L.B.; Edgar, E. 1970: Flora of New Zealand Vol. II. Wellington, Government Printer.

NZPCN FACT SHEET CITATION

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

MORE INFORMATION

<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/ripogonum-scandens/>

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17 September 2024