

Hesperocyparis macrocarpa

COMMON NAMES

macrocarpa

BIOSTATUS

Exotic

CONSERVATION STATUS

Not applicable

CATEGORY

Vascular

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Trees & Shrubs - Gymnosperms

FLOWER COLOURS

No flowers

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Medium sized tree to about 36 metres. Has distinctive fluted trunk when mature, bark is thick, reddish brown beneath often becoming whitish on the surface. **Adult foliage** many small dark green scales closely appressed to the branchlets, but not flattened. **Juvenile foliage** more needle like, and not appressed. **Male cones** up to about 3 mm long, yellow and knobby arising on the tips of the branches. **Female cone** terminal, rosette-like at first, becoming a rounded brown cone with 8–14 scales when mature. **Seeds**: usually 10–20 per cone scale.

SIMILAR TAXA

The scales closely appressed on mature plants, but stems not becoming flattened. There are several *Hesperocyparis* and *Cupressus* species in cultivation in New Zealand but *H. macrocarpa* is by far the most common, and can be identified by the blunt leaves lacking resin glands, and the shining brown mature cones.

HABITAT

Terrestrial. regenerating bush and scrub near planted trees and hedgerows.

THREATS

Capable of colonising coastal cliffs and analogous habitat (e.g. roadside cuttings).

GENUS

Hesperocyparis

FAMILY

Cupressaceae

AUTHORITY

Hesperocyparis macrocarpa Hartw.

SYNONYMS

Cupressus macrocarpa (Hartw.) Bartel

ENDEMIC FAMILY

No



South Karori, Wellington. Photographer: Jeremy R. Rolfe, Date taken: 11/08/2012, Licence: CC BY.



Scale leaves appressed to the stems, imbricate (overlapping), decussate (opposite pairs of leaves at right angles to each other); stems terete (rounded, not flattened). Photographer: Jeremy R. Rolfe, Date taken: 28/12/2023, Licence: CC BY.

YEAR NATURALISED

1904

ORIGIN

Monterey Peninsula, California, N. America

REASON FOR INTRODUCTION

Forestry

TOLERANCES

Seedlings are moderately shade-tolerant but do best on sunny banks.

LIFE CYCLE AND DISPERSAL

Reproduces by seed; at least 150 seeds per mature female cone, estimated at least 10 000 cones per mature tree.

Dispersed by people, wind, gravity.

ETYMOLOGY

macrocarpa: Large fruit

ENVIRONMENTAL WEED (2024)

This plant is named in a list of 386 environmental weeds in New Zealand 2024 prepared by DOC. 759 candidate species were considered for inclusion on this new comprehensive list of environmental weeds in New Zealand. The species considered were drawn from published lists of weed species, lists of plants that must be reported or managed by law if observed, existing national and regional programmes and agreements for pest management, and species already managed by the Department of Conservation (DOC). Candidate species were then assessed to see if they were fully naturalised and whether they have more than minor impacts in natural ecosystems. Read the full report [here](#).

NVS CODE

HESMAC

MORE INFORMATION

<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/hesperocyparis-macrocarpa/>

PDF DATE

25 May 2026