



Podocarpus totara var. *totara*

Common Name(s):

Totara

Current Threat Status (2012):

Not Threatened

Distribution:

Endemic. Common throughout most of the North and South Islands. Present but extremely scarce on Stewart Island (Freshwater River).

Habitat:

Widespread and at times abundant tree of lowland, montane and lower subalpine forest. May also form a vegetation type in which it is the dominant species.

Features:

Robust dioecious conifer up to 30 m tall. Trunk stout, 2-3 m diam., clad in thick, corky, furrowed and somewhat stringy reddish-grey bark. Trunk without branches at base, branches stout, erect to spreading. Leaf bud narrower than or the same diam., as branchlet, surrounded by caducous, papery, narrowly lanceolate bracts. Leaves brownish-green, erect, leathery; juvenile 20 x 1-2 mm, adults 15-30 x 3-4 mm., linear-lanceolate, acute, apex pungent, mid-vein distinct to obscure. Male cones (strobili) axillary 10-15 mm, solitary or in 4s. Female branchlets axillary, ovules solitary or paired, receptacle of 2-4 scales, acute and free at tips, maturing as a red, swollen, succulent, sweet tasting "fruit" this surmounted by a 1(-2) broadly elliptic, ovoid-oblong 3-6 mm, semi-glossy, buff, grey nut brown, henna or dark brown (green to glaucous-green) when fresh, seed.

Fructing:

Flowering:

(August-)
October (-
December)

Fruits take a year or so to ripen, and may be found throughout the year, usually peaking at about the same time that cones are produced. They are most frequently seen between April and May

Threats:

Not Threatened, though as a vegetation type it is all but extinct throughout most of its former range.

References and further reading:

Gardner, R. 1990. Totara and Halls totara. *Auckland Botanical Society Journal*, 45:27-28.

Moorfield, J. C. (2005). *Te aka : Maori-English, English-Maori dictionary and index*. Pearson Longman: Auckland, N.Z.

Landcare Research. *Nga Tipu Whakaoranga - Maori Plant Use Database*.
<http://maoriplantuse.landcareresearch.co.nz/WebForms/default.aspx>

For more information, visit:

http://nzpcn.org.nz/flora_details.asp?ID=1176



Caption: *Podocarpus totara* var. *totara* at Pokemokemoke

Photographer: Wayne Bennett



Caption: Seeds of *Podocarpus totara* var. *totara*

Photographer: Wayne Bennett