



Sophora tetraptera

Common Name(s):

kowhai, large-leaved kowhai

Current Threat Status (2012):

Not Threatened

Distribution:

Endemic. Known in a natural state only from the eastern portion of the the North Island from East Cape south to the Wairarapa, extending west toward Taihape, Lake Taupo and along the Waikato River to about Lake Karapiro. However, extensively planted outside this range and often naturalising.

Habitat:

Widespread and common from coastal forested habitats inland along rivers and within associated low scrub and forest. Common around lake margins (especially Lake Taupo) and on ignimbrite cliffs bordering the upper Waikato River. Although a primarily lowland species it can occur in montane riparian forest.

Features*:

Tree up to 15 m tall, trunk 0.6-1 m diam., often several arising from ground. Branches spreading, sometimes pendulous. Branchlets clad in golden yellow or grey tomentum. Juvenile plants not divaricating or flexuous, exhibiting an erect growth, non-interlacing habit from germination. Leaves 100-150(-220) mm, imparipinnate, moderately hairy, hairs, straight, appressed. Leaflets 10-20(-25) pairs, 15-35(-40) x 5-8 mm, well spaced, never overlapping or crowded, narrowly ovate to elliptic-oblong. Inflorescences racemose with up to 10 flowers. Calyx 10-20 x 10-15 mm, cupulate. Flowers golden-yellow, keel petal blade 20-50(-60) x 10-16(-18) mm, wing petal blade 25-50(-62) x 10-16 mm, standard petal blade 30-35(-42) x 18-30(-35) mm; petals with distinct claws 6-8 mm long. Fruit (100-)200(-280) mm long, broadly 4-winged, brown, with 6-12 or more seeds. Seeds 6.5-9(-10) x 6-7.5 mm, oblong, elliptic to orbicular, yellow to light yellow-brown.

Flowering:

(September-) October-December

Fruiting:

October-May

Threats:

The main threat that faces all wild New Zealand kowhai species is the risk posed through planting for revegetation and horticultural purposes of hybrid material, foreign species, such as the Chilean Pelu (*S. cassioides*) and also of kowhai species outside their natural range. However, *S. tetraptera* seems to be very common throughout its range, and is adequately protected within a range of reserves and land set aside for conservation purposes.

*Attribution:

Fact Sheet prepared for NZPCN by P.J. de Lange (31 July 2004). Description adapted from Allan (1961).

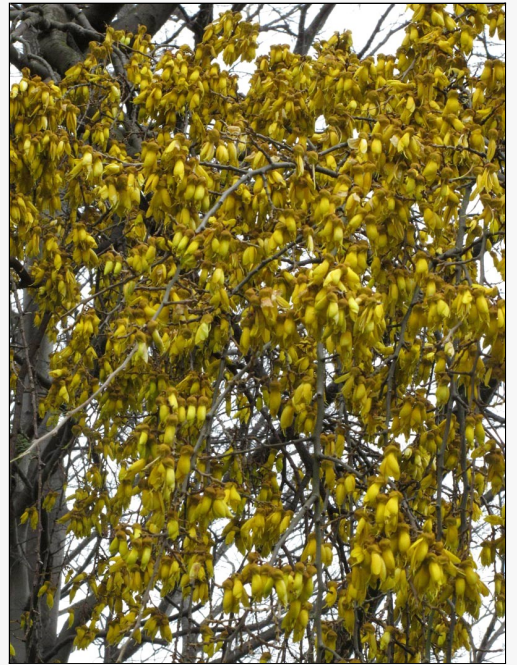
References and further reading:

Allan, H.H. 1961: Flora of New Zealand. Vol. I. Wellington, Government Printer.

Anonymous. 1944. Kowhai. *Wellington Botanical Society Bulletin* 9: 4-5

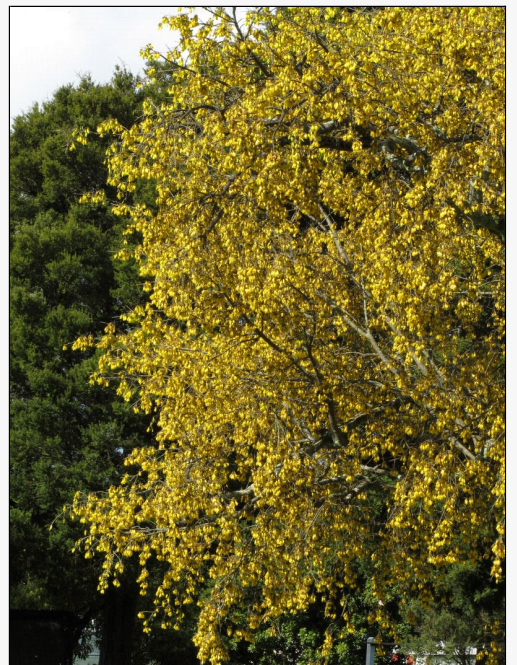
For more information, visit:

http://nzpcn.org.nz/flora_details.asp?ID=1304



Caption: Dunedin Botanic Garden

Photographer: John Barkla



Caption: Masterton, Wairarapa

Photographer: John Barkla