



Pittosporum ellipticum

Current Threat Status (2012):

At Risk - Naturally Uncommon

Distribution:

Endemic. North Island from Te Paki to Mt Pirongia in the west and about the Karangahake and Waioeka Gorges in the East.

Habitat:

Most usually associated with kauri (*Agathis australis*) forest, often on ridge lines, slips scars or in secondary regrowth within cut over kauri forest. Outside this forest type it is often found in association with tanekaha (*Phyllocladus trichomanoides*), towai (*Weinmannia silvicola*) or kamahi (*Weinmannia racemosa*). In all situations it prefers relatively open vegetation, where it typically forms apparently evenly-aged cohorts.

Features*:

Small gynodioecious tree up to 8 m tall but usually less. Trunk and branches dark brown, young branchlets clad in fine, appressed rust-coloured tomentum. Leaves alternate, crowded at tips of branches. Petioles 4-15 x 1.5-2 mm, densely invested in appressed, rust-coloured tomentum. Lamina 30-97 x 15-50 mm, yellow-green to dark green above, pale red-green or reddish-yellow beneath, elliptic-oblong, ovate or obovate, apex and base acute or obtuse, margin entire; emergent and expanding leaves densely invested in appressed, rust-coloured tomentum, soon becoming glabrate above and sparsely tomentose to glabrate beneath, coriaceous. Flowers in terminal 2-6-flowered fascicles; pedicels 5-14 mm, accrescent in fruit, rusty orange to rust-grey tomentose, subtended by several caducous, rusty-tomentose 1-2 mm long bud scales. Sepals linear, acuminate, 8-11 x 2-2.7 mm, rusty-tomentose, ciliate; petals 14-19.5 x 3-3.5 mm, oblanceolate-linear, subacute, recurved at tips, reddish-brown, chocolate or dark golden yellow; stamens 7-11 mm, anthers 1-3 mm. Ovary 2.5-7.5 x 1.5-4.5 mm, invested in rust-coloured hairs, style 1.5-6.5 mm long, stigma capitate or tuncate. Capsules, woody, subglobose, 3 or 2-valved, 15-20 x 13-17 mm, covered in rust-brown to rust-grey tomentum. Mucilage yellow-red to orange. Seeds 25-36 (with many aborted), reddish-back, somewhat irregular in outline.

Flowering:

July - October

Fruiting:

August - January (though fruit is long persistent and may be seen year round)

Threats:

Not directly threatened though it is generally very uncommon throughout its range, and where found it is often known from one or two trees. However, there are exceptions, for example the species is common along the ridge lines of Mt Manaia, Bream Head and in the Waitakere Ranges (especially near Anawhata and Destruction Gully).

*Attribution:

Fact sheet prepared for NZPCN by P.J. de Lange 30 August 2006. Description adapted from Cooper (1956).

References and further reading:

Cooper, R.C. 1956: The Australian and New Zealand species of *Pittosporum*. *Annals of the Missouri Botanical Garden* 43: 87-188

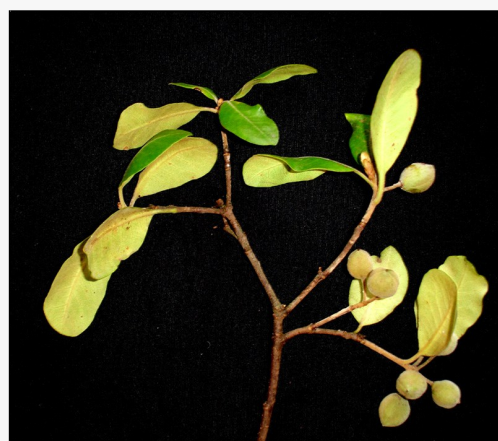
For more information, visit:

http://nzpcn.org.nz/flora_details.asp?ID=300



Caption: Foliage

Photographer: Peter de Lange



Caption: *Pittosporum ellipticum* close up of foliage and fruits

Photographer: Peter de Lange