



## *Pittosporum virgatum*

### Current Threat Status (2012):

At Risk - Naturally Uncommon

### Distribution:

Endemic. New Zealand, North and Great Barrier islands, from the Mangamuka and Herekino Ranges south and east to Great Barrier and the Coromandel Peninsula. Reaching its southern limit at about the Kauaerange Valley (there are unconfirmed reports of its occurring slightly further south of there).

### Habitat:

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 occasionally 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\*:

Slender gynodioecious trees up to 8 m tall. Growth form initially narrowly columnar, becoming more spreading with age. Trunks slender grey brown, branches in distinct whorls in old specimens confined to the upper portion of the tree, bark brown, branchlets slender, pliant, brown at first covered with appressed rust-brown tomentum, soon glabrate. Petioles 1-7 x 0.5-1 mm, hairy. Leaves crowded toward branchlet ends, alternate; juvenile or lower leaves 10-40 x 1-7 mm, dark green or yellow-green, linear, entire or variously lobed, sometimes pinnate, both surfaces initially covered in rust-brown tomentum, soon glabrate; intermediate leaves 13-55 x 9-30 mm, lanceolate, narrowly linear, oblong or obovate, usually lobed or deeply divided both surfaces covered in rust-brown indumentum, soon glabrate; adult leaves 18-70 x 4-30 mm, oblong, oblanceolate, sometimes linear or linear-lanceolate, elliptic oblong, entire or sinuate, often lobed; margins flat to undulate. Flowers in 1-6-flowered, terminal fascicles, or solitary. Pedicels 5-9 mm, accrescent in fruit, covered in rust-brown indumentum, subtended by an approximate whorl of leaves, and 1-3 rust-tomentose caducous scales. Sepals 3.5-6.5 x 1-2.5 mm, oblong or linear-lanceolate, acute, rusty-brown tomentose. Petals 6-13 x 2-3 mm, linear-oblanceolate to linear-oblong, acute, fused in a tube for half of length, tips reflexed, dark red, purple, pink, white or golden yellow; stamens 4-7 mm, anthers sagittiform or oblong-ovate, ovary 2-4 x 1-2.5 mm, rusty-brown tomentose; style 1-5 mm, stigma capitate and obscurely 2-4-lobed. Capsules 11-16 x 10-13 mm, 2(-3)-valved, subglobose to subpyriform, apiculate, coriaceous. Mucilage bright yellow to orange-yellow. Seeds 1-16, dull black of irregular shape.

### Flowering:

September - November

### Fruiting:

July - August (may be present all year round)

### Threats:

Aside from Great Barrier Island where this species is abundant it appears to have always been a sporadically occurring local species of northern kauri dominated forests. While its current distribution suggests that it is biologically sparse, it is vulnerable to possum browsing and some populations were probably lost or reduced by kauri logging. Recent observations in some parts of Northland that had been regarded as mainland stronghold suggest that this species is now seriously threatened. *Pittosporum virgatum* is likely to receive a higher threat listing in the near future.

### \*Attribution:

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

### References and further reading:

Cameron, M. 1944. On the trail of *Pittosporum virgatum*. Wellington Botanical Society Bulletin, 8: 1-2

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

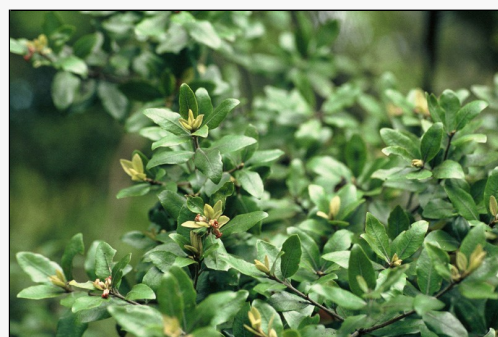
### For more information, visit:

[http://nzpcn.org.nz/flora\\_details.asp?ID=302](http://nzpcn.org.nz/flora_details.asp?ID=302)



**Caption:** Whangaroa Harbour, November 1992

**Photographer:** G. M. Crowcroft



**Caption:** Whangaroa Harbour, November 1992

**Photographer:** G. M. Crowcroft