



Pseudopanax ferox

Common Name(s):

Fierce lancewood

Current Threat Status (2012):

At Risk - Naturally Uncommon

Distribution:

Endemic. North and South Islands. In the North rather patchy, known from Ahipara, Woodhill Forest (South Kaipara), the Moawhango and southern Rimutaka Range. In the S. Island more widespread but easterly from the Marlborough Sounds to Southland.

Habitat:

Coastal to subalpine (10-800 m a.s.l.) on consolidated sand dunes (dune forest), in grey scrub overlying pumice, on recent alluvial (coarse gravels), limestone outcrops, boulder fall, cliff faces, talus slopes and scarps. Also found as a sparse component of seasonally drought-prone but otherwise cold and wet alluvial forests. This species prefers drier habitats and conditions than *P. crassifolius* (Sol. ex A.Cunn.) C.Koch.

Features:

Gynodioecious small tree up to 8 m tall. Trunk slender, longitudinally deeply grooved and ridged, bark fawn, mottled grey-white, often finely encrusted with lichens. Seedling leaves patent, 15-40 x 3-6 mm, dark or light chocolate brown to almost black, linear-lanceolate, margins deeply lobed with hooked ends; sapling and unbranched juvenile leaves strongly deflexed, 100-500 x 6-15 mm, light brown mottled with fawn and white near lobes or dark chocolate brown, mottled with fawn and white near lobes, coriaceous, very thick and rigid, margins set with closely-spaced to more or less distant, broadly and broad-based, somewhat raised, rounded, prominently and sharply hooked lobes; midrib raised, 2 mm wide, leaf apex terminating in 2-6 crowded, hooked lobes; leaves at branching stage similar but shorter, sub- to ascending, sometimes more deeply and sharply lobed before passing into adult foliage. Adult leaves 50-150 x 10-20 mm, dark or light chocolate brown, oblong to linear-obovate or broadly lanceolate, narrowing to a stout petiole 10-20 mm long; apex obtuse or mucronate-apiculate, retuse, bluntly serrate to entire, veins evident above. Umbels terminal, compound, staminate and perfect umbels with 5-12 rays, 30-50 mm long; flowers more or less racemosely distributed, trending to umbellules in perfect flowers; pistillate with rays 10-30 mm long, umbellules 2-5-flowered. Stamens 4-5, ovary 5-loculed, 5-ovuled; style branches 5, fused, sometimes free at tips. Fruit 8-9 mm diameter, brown or purple-brown, ovoid, fleshy.

Flowering:

November - April

Fruiting:

December - June

Threats:

Probably warrants a higher threat listing. *P. ferox* is biologically sparse but it is also threatened by possum, deer and goat browse, because juvenile plants command high prices in the nursery trade accessible populations have and continue to be plundered for seedlings and ripe fruit. Hybridisation with *P. lessonii* (DC.) K.Koch has been reported from several northern populations, if substantiated, the long-term effect hybridism may have on the viability of *P. ferox* at these sites has yet to be evaluated. The most secure populations seem to be the one in the southern North Island and a few island populations in the Marlborough Sounds and those in the more remote parts of the south-eastern South Island.

For more information, visit:

http://nzpcn.org.nz/flora_details.asp?ID=307



Caption: Pigeon Island, Lake Wakatipu

Photographer: John Barkla



Caption: Seedlings, Cultivated, Dunedin

Photographer: John Barkla