



Streblus banksii

Common Name(s):

Large-leaved milk tree, turepo

Current Threat Status (2012):

At Risk - Relict

Distribution:

Endemic. New Zealand: North and South Islands. In the North Island mainly easterly from about Kaitaia to East Cape, Waikato and northern Hawkes Bay, including islands of the Hauraki Gulf, thence somewhat disjunct reappearing in the Horowhenua to Wellington and the western side of the Wairarapa. Confined to the northern South Island where populations are known from the Marlborough Sounds (mainly islands), Abel Tasman National Park, and also the eastern Golden Bay.

Habitat:

Coastal and lowland forests (0-200 m a.s.l.), preferring deep, fertile soils, large trees are often found on alluvial terraces. On offshore islands it seems more able to tolerate drier conditions and skeletal soils and may at times be found on steep cliff faces, rock ledges, or as stunted shrubs on cobble/boulder beaches.

Features*:

Dioecious, robust tree or large shrub (depending on growing conditions) up to 12 m tall, usually with a broad canopy crown; trunk up to 0.8 m d.b.h., bark dark brown. Branches ascending at first then widely spreading; branchlets somewhat flexuous, wiry and pliant, initially puberulent and very lenticellate, later glabrate. Leaves of juvenile plants variable 20-60 x 10-30 mm, dark green above, paler beneath, elliptic-oblong, margins finely to deeply crenate, usually deeply lobed, pandurate, sinus obtuse; petioles up to 8 mm long. Leaves of adults 35-85 x 20-35 mm, dark green to yellow green, paler beneath, ovate to broadly ovate, ovate-elliptic, obtuse to subacute, margins crenate (very rarely lobed), petioles stout up to 10 mm long. Inflorescences axillary or terminal, spicate, solitary, paired or in threes; staminate up to 30 mm long, densely flowered, flowers rather densely close-set, almost imbricating, grey-green, perianth 4-partite, segments obtuse to rounded; pistillate similar, up to 25 mm long, flowers widely spaced, distichously arranged. Fruits up to 65 mm diameter, drupaceous, broad-ovoid, fleshy, flesh red.

Flowering:

August - October

Fruiting:

October - April

Threats:

It would appear that this species may once have been quite widespread. However, its current distribution is typically sparse and it is rarely common anywhere except on rodent-free offshore islands in the Hauraki Gulf and off the eastern Coromandel Peninsula. In mainland areas and on rodent infested islands plants are damaged by possum and goat browsing, and also by rodents which avidly eat the fruit, seed and emerging seedlings. In remnants being dioecious sex imbalance can be an issue. Successful island rodent eradication's have allowed this species to reestablish itself. It certainly responds rapidly to rodent removal.

*Attribution:

Fact sheet prepared for NZPCN by P.J. de Lange January 2005. Description adapted from Allan (1961).

References and further reading:

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

Mitcalfe, B., Horne, C. 2002. Large-leaved milk tree, ewekuri, in the Wellington Region. Wellington Botanical Society Bulletin, 48: 41-43

For more information, visit:

http://nzpcn.org.nz/flora_details.asp?ID=324



Caption: Photo by Bec Stanley



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