



## *Sophora molloyi*

### Common Name(s):

Cook Strait Kowhai, Molloy's Kowhai

### Current Threat Status (2012):

Naturally Uncommon

### Distribution:

Endemic. New Zealand: North Island (Cape Terawhiti, Turakirae, Palliser Bay) and the Cook Strait (Stephens, Rangitoto, Chetwode, Titi, Arapawa, and Kapiti Islands)

### Habitat:

Coastal. Locally within grey scrub developed on cliff, talus, and active alluvial fans, or in extremely exposed locations, where drought, salt burn, and severe wind damage are significant constraints on plant growth and diversity

### Features\*:

Bushy, spreading to decumbent shrub, up to 3 m high, with several prostrate, decumbent and/or spreading main branches arising at or near ground level. Divaricating and/or flexuose juvenile branchlets absent; branchlets prostrate, decumbent to spreading, moderately to densely pubescent becoming glabrous with age; hairs appressed, straight. Seedlings and juveniles moderately to densely leafy, leaves with increasing numbers of leaflets. Leaflets of juveniles 2.5-3.5 × 2.0-2.5 mm, rotund to broadly elliptic, sparsely to moderately hairy, not crowded or overlapping. Leaves on adults up to 100 mm long, imparipinnate, subconduplicate, petioles and rachides channelled above, leaflets 23-37. Leaflets on adults 5.0-12.0 × 2.0-6.0 mm, elliptic, elliptic oblong, to broadly elliptic, distal and proximal leaflets similar in size, not crowded or overlapping, distant, upper surface dark green, lower surface light green; apices round to slightly retuse; bases obtuse; petiolules 0.4-0.5 mm long; petioles, rachides, petiolules, and leaflets usually pubescent, hairs c.0.2 mm long, appressed, straight. Inflorescences racemose, with up to 5 flowers, flowers usually hidden among foliage; peduncles and rachides 10-20 mm long; Pedicels up to 15 mm long, each subtended by a bract; bracts 1-2 mm long; peduncles, rachides, pedicels, bracts, and calyces moderately to densely pubescent hairs brown, appressed. calyx 9-12 × 10-16 mm, cupulate, rim shallowly lobed, with deeper notch adjacent to standard. Corolla Yellow; keel Petal blade 26-30 × 7.5-11 mm; wing Petal blade 25-30 × 6.5-8.5 mm; standard petal blade 20-23 × 18-21 mm; petals with distinct claws, 4.5-7.5 mm long. stipe 5-7 mm long, glabrous to sparsely pubescent. Ovary 18-20 mm long, densely pubescent; hairs 0.2-0.4 mm long, off-white to light brown, appressed. Style 11-12 mm long, glabrous to sparsely pubescent. Stigma fringed with short hairs. Filaments 24-30 mm long. Anthers 1.7-2.1 × 0.8-0.9 mm. Fruit 50-100 mm long 4-winged, brown, sparsely to moderately pubescent, with up to 9 seeds. Seeds 4.3-8.8 × 3.0-4.0 mm, oblong, light brown to yellow.

### Flowering:

April – October

### Fruiting:

June – May

### Threats:

A Naturally Uncommon, sparsely distributed, range restricted endemic, secure within its island habitats but possibly threatened in some of its North Island locations by browsing animals such as goats.

### \*Attribution:

Description from Heenan et al. (2001).

### References and further reading:

Heenan, P.B.; de Lange, P.J.; Wilton, A.D. 2001: *Sophora* (Fabaceae) in New Zealand: taxonomy, distribution, and biogeography. *New Zealand Journal of Botany*, 39: 17-53

### For more information, visit:

[http://nzpcn.org.nz/flora\\_details.asp?ID=687](http://nzpcn.org.nz/flora_details.asp?ID=687)



**Caption:** Te Humenga, Cape Palliser  
**Photographer:** Peter de Lange



**Caption:** Kowhai  
**Photographer:** Jeremy Rolfe