



Pittosporum patulum

Common Name(s):

Pitpat

Current Threat Status (2012):

Threatened - Nationally Endangered

Distribution:

Endemic to South Island, found in north-west Nelson, and from eastern Nelson south to the head of Lake Hawea.

Habitat:

This is a species of subalpine scrub, and canopy gaps in mountain beech forest. It often occurs in sites that have undergone disturbance (e.g., avalanche chutes, fire induced scrub, and river margins), although it is not always required for regeneration. Strongholds of adults occur in subalpine scrub that are recruiting without disturbance, and bluffs in beech forest are similarly little-disturbed.

Features*:

Gynodioecious tree up to 5 m tall. Trunk of juvenile and sub adults slender, becoming stouter in adults. Bark firm, pale-brown to grey-brown. Branches ascending to spreading, in juveniles absent or scarce until sub adult stage, becoming more frequent in plants bearing mature foliage; in either case branchlets marked by scars from fallen leaves. Shoots, emergent foliage and peduncles distinctly though sparsely puberulent; hairs fulvous. Leaves coriaceous, dark brown-green, chocolate-brown to dark-green, often blemished along margins with chocolate. Juvenile leaves erecto patent, ascending, 30-60 x 5-8 mm, linear, lamina coarsely toothed, very rarely pinnatifid; leaves of sub adults similar but wider, with margins less deeply toothed, and never pinnatifid; adult foliage crowded toward branchlet ends; petioles stout, 5-15 mm long, lamina 40-50 x 10-20 mm, oblanceolate, narrow-obovate to obovate, rarely elliptic, margins entire, toothed or with fine teeth in upper third, base attenuate, apex obtuse to subacute. Flowers in distinct, terminal, 4-8-10-flowered umbels. Pedicels gracile, 10-20 mm long. Flowers night-fragrant. Sepals 5, 3-6 mm long, narrow-ovate, acute, grey-green pilose hairy, becoming glabrescent. Petals 5, 6-8 mm, broadly lanceolate, apex obtuse to sub acute, recurving almost to base at anthesis, dark-red, pink, very rarely yellow. Male flowers with 5 functional stamens, anthers yellow, stigma rudimentary, rarely functional. Female flowers with 5 rudimentary stamens (often reduced to staminodes), stigma globose, functional. Capsules subglobose, 10 mm diameter, 2-valved, valves initially green, glabrescent, maturing grey-black to charcoal, woody. Mucilage dark orange to red. Seeds 5-8, irregular globose, black, surface glossy.

Flowering:

Late spring - mid summer

Fruiting:

no information

Threats:

Pittosporum patulum is palatable. Ungulates eat juvenile foliage, and possums eat both the juvenile and adult foliage and flowers. Rodents predate seed in litter beneath adult trees, and insect browse can deform new growth. Natural disturbance has eliminated some populations.

*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=88



Caption: Leaf variation, herbarium voucher

Photographer: John Barkla



Caption: South Temple Valley, immature fruit

Photographer: John Barkla