



Brachyglottis huntii

Common Name(s):

Rautini, Chatham Island Christmas tree

Current Threat Status (2012):

Threatened - Nationally Vulnerable

Distribution:

Endemic to the Chatham Islands. Found on both Chatham Island and Pitt Island. It was once much more common and widespread on Chatham Island but has declined seriously over the last century. On Pitt Island it is still quite widespread; expanding where stock and feral animals are in low numbers, but diminishing elsewhere.

Habitat:

Brachyglottis huntii prefers frequently disturbed and/or early successional habitats, such as those found along stream and river sides, open shrubland, drier swamps, and along ridge crests. It is usually found growing on permanently moist forest and restiad peats and cannot tolerate protracted periods of drought, or heavy shade.

Features*:

Aromatic, small woody tree up to 6 x 6 m. Bark grey, flaking usually in small shards. Branches stout, spreading, usually bearing numerous leaf scars, leaf toward apex, dead leaves long persistent. Leaves 70-180 x 20-40 mm, ovate, elliptic-lanceolate, grey green, apex subacute, lamina entire or finely toothed in upper third; buds and emergent leaves viscid, resinous, rather aromatic, initially densely clad on both surfaces with fulvous tomentum, becoming glabrescent with age. Inflorescences in dense, terminal panicles, subtended by leaves, all parts viscous, resinous. Pedicels stout, 5-15 mm long, densely glandular pubescent. Capitula 20-30 mm diam., involucral bracts 10-12(-15), narrow-oblong, obtuse to subacute, grey-green, glandular on under sides, ciliate on margins, apex surmounted by a conspicuous tuft of hairs. Ray-florets 15-20, ligules c. 10 mm long, yellow, broad, recurving with age. Cypsela (seeds) 1.5-1.8 mm long, narrow-oblong, pale brown to brown, grooved, glabrescent; pappus-hairs 5-7 mm long, off-white, slender, distinctly barbellate.

Flowering:

November -
February

Fruiting:

Late summer and early
autumn

Threats:

Brachyglottis huntii was once much more common and widespread on Chatham Island but has declined seriously over the last century. On Pitt Island it is still quite widespread; expanding where stock and feral animals are in low numbers, but diminishing elsewhere. Threats are myriad and include habitat destruction; browsing and trampling by cattle, sheep, pigs and possums. While fire can destroy plants the disturbance caused can also provide fresh sites for seedlings to colonise.

*Attribution:

Fact Sheet prepared for NZPCN by P.J. de Lange 11 March 2004. Description subsequently published in de Lange et al. (2010)

References and further reading:

de Lange, P.J.; Heenan, P.B.; Norton, D.A.; Rolfe, J.R.; Sawyer, J.W.D. 2010: Threatened Plants of New Zealand. Christchurch, Canterbury University Press.

Thorsen, M. J.; Dickinson, K. J. M.; Seddon, P. J. 2009. Seed dispersal systems in the New Zealand flora. Perspectives in Plant Ecology, Evolution and Systematics 2009 Vol. 11 No. 4 pp. 285-309

For more information, visit:

http://nzpcn.org.nz/flora_details.asp?ID=52



Caption: Chatham Islands
Photographer: Peter de Lange



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