

Pseudopanax colensoi var. colensoi

COMMON NAME

mountain fivefinger, three finger

SYNONYMS

Panax colensoi Hook.f., *Pseudopanax colensoi* (Hook.f.) Philipson, *Pseudopanax colensoi* var. *fiordensis* Wardle, *Neopanax colensoi* (Hook.f.) Allan, *Nothopanax* (Hook.f.) Seem.

FAMILY

Araliaceae

AUTHORITY

Pseudopanax colensoi (Hook.f.) Philipson var. *colensoi*

FLORA CATEGORY

Vascular – Native

ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes

ENDEMIC GENUS

No

ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Trees & Shrubs - Dicotyledons

CHROMOSOME NUMBER

2n = 48

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2017 | Not Threatened

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2012 | Not Threatened

2009 | Not Threatened

2004 | Not Threatened

BRIEF DESCRIPTION

Small much-branched tree with 5 fleshy leaflets arranged fanwise on very short stems

DISTRIBUTION

Central North Island and Coromandel Range south to Banks Peninsula (and possibly Dunedin) on South Island east coast. Apparently absent from South Island West Coast. Plants with sessile leaflets from the Fiordland-Stewart Island area are often referred to *Pseudopanax colensoi* var. *fiordensis* Wardle

HABITAT

Montane to low alpine forest and scrub

WETLAND PLANT INDICATOR STATUS RATING

UPL: Obligate Upland

Rarely is a hydrophyte, almost always in uplands (non-wetlands).



Pseudopanax colensoi. Photographer: John Smith-Dodsworth, Licence: CC BY-NC.



Pseudopanax colensoi. Photographer: John Smith-Dodsworth, Licence: CC BY-NC.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Us. dioecious. Small multi-branched tree to 8 m tall, branchlets fleshy brittle. Leaves alternate, leaflets (3-)5(-7), palmate, subsessile or on short petiolules. Petioles 5-20 cm long, sheathing branchlet at base and with small erect stipule. Petiolules absent or short, of terminal leaflet to 0-5-10-(15) mm long, shorter on lateral leaflets, pale green, reddish at base. Leaflets narrow-ovate to broadly elliptic-oblong, cuneately narrowing to petiolule, thinly coriaceous, coarsely serrate-dentate in upper 2/3 - 3/4, acute to obtuse; midrib obvious above and below, lateral veins obscure; darker shiny green above; terminal lamina 5-17 x 2-11 cm, lateral leaflets decreasing in size. Inflorescence a terminal umbel; c. 8 primary rays (branchlets); 10-12 secondary rays; umbellules with 5-10 flowers in each. Calyx truncate or obscurely 5-toothed; flowers c. 5 mm diam.; petals 5, cream or greenish, ovate to triangular, acute; ovary 2-loculed, each containing 1 ovules; style branches 2. Fruit fleshy, 4-6 mm diam., style branches retained on an apical disc, dark purple when ripe. Seeds 2 per fruit, shallowly wrinkled, 2.9-4.3 mm long, rounded.

SIMILAR TAXA

Often confused with *Pseudopanax arboreus*, which also has 5 leaflets, from this species it can be distinguished by its shorter petiolules (leaflet stalk) and the base of the leaflet gradually narrowing to petiolule. The other varieties of *Pseudopanax colensoi* are distinguished their number of leaflets and distribution. The presence of a range of forms of probable hybrid arrangement at some sites can make identification difficult at times.

FLOWERING

October-March

FLOWER COLOURS

Cream, Green

FRUITING

October-March

ETYMOLOGY

pseudopanax: False cure

colensoi: Named after William Colenso (7 November 1811 - 10 February 1899) who was a Cornish Christian missionary to New Zealand, and also a printer, botanist, explorer and politician.

NOTES ON TAXONOMY

Pseudopanax colensoi var. *fiordensis* remains poorly understood. It may yet prove distinct from *P. colensoi* s.s. but further study is required. Recently, Frodin, D.G. and Govaerts, R (2003: World Checklist and Bibliography of Araliaceae, The Cromwell Press, European Union) reinstated *Neopanax* based on molecular and morphological evidence. In their work they did not provide combinations of the varieties recognised by Peter Wardle in *N. colensoi* (as *P. colensoi*). So as to avoid potential confusion we retain *Neopanax colensoi* in *Pseudopanax* until this issue is rectified.

ATTRIBUTION

Description adapted from Wardle (1968), Allan (1961), Webb and Simpson (2001).

REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

Allan, H.H. 1961. Flora of NZ, Vol. I. Government Printer, Wellington

Wardle, P. 1968. The taxonomy and distribution of the stipulate species of *Pseudopanax* in New Zealand. NZ J. Botany 6: 226-236

Webb, C.J. & Simpson, M.J.A. 2001. Seeds of NZ gymnosperms and dicotyledons. Manuka Press, Christchurch.

MORE INFORMATION

<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/pseudopanax-colensoi-var-colensoi/>