

# 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/>