

Pseudopanax lessonii

COMMON NAME

Houpara

SYNONYMS

Panax lessonii DC.

FAMILY

Araliaceae

AUTHORITY

Pseudopanax lessonii (DC.) K.Koch

FLORA CATEGORY

Vascular – Native

ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes

ENDEMIC GENUS

No

ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Trees & Shrubs - Dicotyledons

NVS CODE

PSELES

CHROMOSOME NUMBER

2n = 48

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2017 | Not Threatened

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2012 | Not Threatened

2009 | Not Threatened

2004 | Not Threatened

BRIEF DESCRIPTION

Coastal tree with fleshy hand-shaped leaves

DISTRIBUTION

Endemic. Three Kings to Poverty Bay and northern Taranaki

HABITAT

Coastal forest and scrub



Motuoruhi, Coromandel, March. Photographer: John Smith-Dodsworth, Licence: CC BY-NC.



Motuoruhi, Coromandel, March. Photographer: John Smith-Dodsworth, Licence: CC BY-NC.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Small tree to 6 m tall; branches stout, with leaves crowded towards tips of branchlets. Leaves alternate, leaflets 3-5, palmate, lateral leaflets smaller; juvenile leaves larger than adult. Petiole to 15 cm long, stout, sheathing stem at base; stipules absent. Leaflets subsessile, terminal leaflet on short petiolule, obovate-cuneate, sinuate-crenate to bluntly serrate in distal half, subacute to obtuse, dark green above, paler beneath, midvein obvious, lateral veins obscure, c. 5-10 x 2-4 cm. Inflorescence a terminal compound umbel; male (staminate) primary rays (branchlets) 4-8 c. 4-5 cm long, flowers racemosely arranged along secondary rays; pistillate (female) primary rays shorter, flowers in irregular umbellules. Petals greenish, acute; anthers on filaments < petals. Ovary 5-loculed, each containing 1 ovule; style branches 5, connate, tips spreading. Fruit fleshy, dark purple, broadly oblong, 7 x 5 mm, style branches retained on an apical disc. 5 Seeds per fruit, narrowly ovate to ovate or oblong, dimpled, 5.5-8.0 mm long.

SIMILAR TAXA

Vegetatively similar to *Pseudopanax colensoi* which has obviously-toothed leaflets

FLOWER COLOURS

Green

ETYMOLOGY

pseudopanax: False cure

ATTRIBUTION

Description adapted from Allan (1961), Eagle (2006) and Webb and Simpson (2001).

REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

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

Eagle, A. 2000. Eagle's complete trees and shrubs of NZ. Te Papa Press, Wellington

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-lessonii/>