

Streblus banksii

COMMON NAME

ewekuri, large-leaved milk tree, tūrepo

SYNONYMS

Paratrophis banksii Cheesem., *Streblus heterophyllus* var. *ellipticus* (Kirk) Corner, *Paratrophis heterophylla* var. *elliptica* Kirk

FAMILY

Moraceae

AUTHORITY

Streblus banksii (Cheeseman) C.Webb

FLORA CATEGORY

Vascular – Native

ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes

ENDEMIC GENUS

No

ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Trees & Shrubs - Dicotyledons

NVS CODE

STRBAN

CHROMOSOME NUMBER

2n = 28

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2017 | At Risk – Relict | Qualifiers: PD, Sp

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2012 | At Risk – Relict | Qualifiers: Sp

2009 | At Risk – Relict | Qualifiers: Sp

2004 | Sparse

BRIEF DESCRIPTION

Tree with grey spotted bark bearing dark green elliptical leaves that alternate along a slightly zig-zagged stem inhabiting warm areas, mainly on offshore islands. Leaves 3.5–8.5 cm long, paler underneath and vein network is easily visible. Flowers small, in clusters of long spikes. Fruit red, 6 mm wide.

DISTRIBUTION

Endemic. New Zealand: North Island (mainly easterly from about Kaitaia to East Cape, Waikato and northern Hawke's Bay, including islands of the Hauraki Gulf, thence somewhat disjunct reappearing in Horowhenua to Wellington and the western side of Wairarapa), South Island (northern parts where populations are known from Marlborough Sounds (mainly islands), Abel Tasman National Park, and also eastern Golden Bay).

HABITAT

Coastal and lowland forests (0–200 m a.s.l.), preferring deep, fertile soils, large trees are often found on alluvial terraces. On offshore islands it seems more able to tolerate drier conditions and skeletal soils and may at times be found on steep cliff faces, rock ledges, or as stunted shrubs on cobble/boulder beaches.



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



False Watchman. Photographer: John Smith-Dodsworth, Licence: CC BY-NC.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Dioecious, robust tree or large shrub (depending on growing conditions) up to 12 m tall, usually with a broad canopy crown; trunk up to 0.8 m d.b.h., bark dark brown. **Branches** ascending at first then widely spreading; branchlets somewhat flexuous, wiry and pliant, initially puberulent and very lenticellate, later glabrate. **Leaves of juvenile plants** variable 20–60 × 10–30 mm, dark green above, paler beneath, elliptic-oblong, margins finely to deeply crenate, usually deeply lobed, pandurate, sinus obtuse; petioles up to 8 mm long. **Leaves of adults** 35–85 × 20–35 mm, dark green to yellow green, paler beneath, ovate to broadly ovate, ovate-elliptic, obtuse to subacute, margins crenate (very rarely lobed), petioles stout up to 10 mm long. **Inflorescences** axillary or terminal, spicate, solitary, paired or in threes; staminate up to 30 mm long, densely flowered, flowers rather densely close-set, almost imbricating, grey-green, perianth 4-partite, segments obtuse to rounded; pistillate similar, up to 25 mm long, flowers widely spaced, distichously arranged. **Fruits** up to 65 mm diameter, drupaceous, broad-ovoid, fleshy, flesh red.

SIMILAR TAXA

This species can and does hybridise with *Streblus heterophyllus*, and some mainland populations can be very hard to place in either species. *S. banksii* generally differs by its non-filiculate growth habit, larger leaves and drupes.

FLOWERING

August–October

FLOWER COLOURS

Cream

FRUITING

October–April

PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

Easily grown from fresh seed and can be grown from semi-hardwood cuttings (though success varies). A fast growing tree which makes an ideal specimen tree, and can be used as a hedge as it responds well to clipping. Prefers a deep, free draining, fertile soil. Once established it is very drought tolerant.

THREATS

It would appear that this species may once have been quite widespread. However, its current distribution is typically sparse and it is rarely common anywhere except on rodent-free offshore islands in the Hauraki Gulf and off the eastern Coromandel Peninsula. In mainland areas and on rodent infested islands plants are damaged by possum and goat browsing, and also by rodents which avidly eat the fruit, seed and emerging seedlings. In remnants being dioecious sex imbalance can be an issue. Successful island rodent eradication's have allowed this species to reestablish itself. It certainly responds rapidly to rodent removal.

ETYMOLOGY

banksii: Named after Sir Joseph Banks, 1st Baronet, GCB, PRS (24 February 1743 - 19 June 1820) was an English naturalist, botanist and patron of the natural sciences.

ATTRIBUTION

Fact sheet prepared for NZPCN by P.J. de Lange January 2005. Description adapted from Allan (1961).

REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

Allan HH. 1961. Flora of New Zealand, Volume I. Indigenous Tracheophyta: Psilopsida, Lycopsida, Filicopsida, Gymnospermae, Dicotyledones. Government Printer, Wellington, NZ. 1085 p.
Mitalfe, B., Horne, C. 2002. Large-leaved milk tree, ewekuri, in the Wellington Region. *Wellington Botanical Society Bulletin* 48: 41–43.

NZPCN FACT SHEET CITATION

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MORE INFORMATION

<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/streblus-banksii/>