

Tupeia antarctica

COMMON NAME

Tāpia, pirita, white mistletoe, tupia, kohuorangi

SYNONYMS

Viscum antarcticum G.Forst., *V. pubigerum* A.Cunn., *Tupeia cunninghamii* Miq. *T. pubigera* Miq.

FAMILY

Loranthaceae

AUTHORITY

Tupeia antarctica (G.Forst.) Cham. et Schlecht

FLORA CATEGORY

Vascular – Native

ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes

ENDEMIC GENUS

Yes

ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Trees & Shrubs - Dicotyledons

NVS CODE

TUPANT

CHROMOSOME NUMBER

2n = 24

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2017 | At Risk – Declining | Qualifiers: PD

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2012 | At Risk – Declining | Qualifiers: CD

2009 | At Risk – Declining | Qualifiers: CD

2004 | Gradual Decline

BRIEF DESCRIPTION

Rounded shrub to 1m wide growing on other trees with white bark, finely hairy rounded twigs (lens needed), fleshy variously-shaped bright green leaves and whiteish to pinkish fruit. Leaves 10-70mm long. Flowers tiny.

DISTRIBUTION

Endemic to the North and South Islands.

HABITAT

Forest or scrub (often in regenerating vegetation), where it is parasitic on a wide range of hosts including tarata, karo, *Coprosma* species, putaputaweta, fivefinger, white maire and broom.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

A shrubby semi-parasite to 1 m diameter. Leaves are oppositely arranged, variable in shape, 10 to 70 by 10 to 40 mm, slightly fleshy and bright green. Stems are always rounded in cross section near the tips, have pale white to grey bark, and downy or hairy branchlets. Flowers are tiny, greenish-yellow. Fruit are fleshy, white to pink, 5 to 7 mm diameter.



Close up of foliage. Photographer: Chris Ecroyd, Licence: CC BY-NC.



Tupeia. Photographer: Cathy Jones, Licence: CC BY.

SIMILAR TAXA

Peraxilla colensoi, *P. tetrapetala* and *Trilepidea adamsii* all have colourful flowers. *Ileostylus micranthus* has tiny, yellow-green flowers, a 'bent' style, yellow fruit and young stems that are squarish in cross-section and have multiple attachments to its host. All these species are hairless.

FLOWERING

Flowers from October to December.

FLOWER COLOURS

Green, Yellow

FRUITING

Fruit appear from December to March.

PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

Difficult. Has been grown successfully by some people but many others have failed. Best success is achieved with seed that has been sown fresh (within one to two days of harvesting) onto a suitable host.

THREATS

Possum browse is the primary threat to this species. Insect browse, habitat destruction, loss of pollinating and seed-dispersing native birds, collectors, vandalism and fungal disease also threaten this species.

ETYMOLOGY

tupeia: Named after Tupaia (c. 1725 – December, 26 1770) who was a Tahitian Polynesian navigator and arioi (a kind of priest), originally from the island of Ra'iatea in the Pacific Islands (see Chamisso & Schlechtendal, 1828).

antarctica: Antarctic

CULTURAL USE/IMPORTANCE

This species will on occasion extend into beech forest where it has been found parasitic on red mistletoe (*Peraxilla tetrapetala*). Favoured indigenous hosts include *Pseudopanax arboreus*, *Carpodetus serratus*, *Nestegis cunninghamii*, *Pittosporum eugenoides*, *P. tenuifolium*, and *Coprosma* spp. At present the species has been recorded from 48 hosts (11 exotic) spread through 32 genera and 20 families (de Lange et al. 1997), though this figure needs revision as since that time many more hosts have been reported.

ATTRIBUTION

Fact sheet prepared by P.J. de Lange for NZPCN (1 June 2013)

REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

Chamisso, L.K.A.; Schlechtendal, D.F.L. 1828: Lorantheae pp. 203-204. *Linnaea* 3(3): 200-219.

de Lange, P.J.; Norton, D.A.; Molloy, B.P.J. 1997: An annotated checklist of New Zealand mistletoe (Loranthaceae) hosts. Pp. 83-104. In: de Lange P.J.; Norton, D.A. (eds.) *New Zealand's loranthaceous mistletoes*. Conference proceedings. Wellington, Department of Conservation.

NZPCN FACT SHEET CITATION

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MORE INFORMATION

<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/tupeia-antarctica/>