

## NZ Myrtaceae Key - Online edition

# *Kunzea amathicola* de Lange & Toelken

### Common Names

kānuka, rawiritoa

### Origin

New Zealand endemic.

### Cultivation

Rare in cultivation.

### Distribution

Western coastal areas and lowlands, predominantly in sandy soils associated with dunes in the upper and lower parts of the North Island, and north-western parts of Nelson in the South Island of New Zealand.

### Distinguishing Features

- Branchlets with copious silky hairs.
- Different juvenile and adult foliage types (but see *K. robusta*).
- Juvenile leaves obovate, adult leaves often so (*K. linearis* leaves linear).
- Leaves with copiously hairy leaf margins and midribs (but see *K. robusta*) with the hairs meeting at the leaf apex.
- Flowers stalked (*K. linearis* flowers  $\pm$  stalkless).
- Flower spikes can be long (to 200 mm).
- Fruit  $\pm$  4–6 mm in diam., flat-topped when valves closed.

### Habit

Shrubs mostly to about 3 m tall, adopting a low sprawling habit on mobile sand, sand dunes and sandy soils, or may be trees up to 15 m tall when extending inland onto clay soils.

### Bark and Stem/Trunk

Bark dark and furrowed. Branchlets with copious silky hairs.

### Leaves

Plants may possess juvenile or adult foliage (heterophyllous); adult leaves generally 2.5 times as long and 1.5 times as wide as juvenile leaves. Leaves alternate, ovate to obovate, (4–)5–7(–12) mm long, (1.5–)2–3 mm wide, dark green above, paler below, leaf surfaces mostly hairless (but margins copiously hairy with hairs meeting at the leaf apex), not puckered; margins entire; tips blunt; leaf stalks absent.

### Flowers

Flowers borne in elongated clusters to 200 mm long, stem with silky hairs; flowers  $\pm$  7–12 mm in diam., stalks present, petals 5, white; oil glands colourless; sepals 5, tips free, stamens 38–90, white, longer than petals. Main flowering period: late spring to summer, but some flowers may be present at any time of the year.

### Fruit

Fruit dry, 5-locular,  $\pm$  4–6 mm wide, flat-topped when valves closed.

### Similar Species

The inflorescences of *K. amathicola* are most similar to *K. linearis* but it is distinguished by possessing ovate to obovate as opposed to linear leaves, as well as stalked as opposed to stalkless flowers. *Kunzea amathicola* can be confused with *K. robusta* with which it sometimes grows; it differs, however, by the elongated inflorescences, leaf shape and copious covering of hairs on the leaf margins. *Kunzea amathicola* also resembles *K. triregensis*, but the latter is the sole representative of the genus on the Three Kings Islands.

### Notes

*Kunzea amathicola* is a recently described (de Lange 2014) New Zealand endemic coastal species. It has a 2018 conservation status of Threatened – Nationally Vulnerable.

The genus *Kunzea* also occurs in Australia, where it is represented by more than 50 species of which three (*K. ambigua*, *K. baxteri*, *K. parvifolia*) are cultivated occasionally in gardens in New Zealand; another nine species are recorded as having been included in research trials or as rare garden occurrences.

### External Links

- Flora of New Zealand Online
- GBIF
- iNaturalist NZ

- NZPCN

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