

## NZ Myrtaceae Key - Online edition

# *Kunzea linearis* (Kirk) de Lange & Toelken

### Synonyms

*Kunzea ericoides* var. *linearis* (Kirk) W.Harris

### Common Names

kānuka, rawiri

### Origin

New Zealand endemic.

### Cultivation

Rare in cultivation.

### Distribution

Mainly coastal shrublands and cliff faces in the North Island of New Zealand from Te Pahi to northern Waikato.

### Distinguishing Features

- Leaves linear.
- Branchlets with copious long appressed hairs.
- Flowers ± sessile, inflorescence therefore spike-like.
- Sepals erect, persistent, as long as petals.
- Petals erect.

### Habit

Shrub to small trees up to ± 12 m tall.

### Bark and Stem/Trunk

Bark brown, firmly attached, but peeling and leaving centrally-attached flakes. Branchlets with copious hairs.

### Leaves

Leaves crowded towards branch tips, alternate, silvery-grey (due to hair), becoming dark green (as hairs shed), linear, ± 12–13(–19) mm long, ± 0.7–1 mm wide, leaf surfaces hairy, rarely hairless, not puckered; margins entire, hairy; tips acute; leaf stalks absent.

### Flowers

Flowers borne in spike-like inflorescences 20–80 mm long or more, axis with silky hairs; flowers ± 5–12 mm in diam., stalks absent or very short, petals 5, white, cream, or pale pink, oil glands colourless; sepals 5, tips free, red-green, lobes erect, persistent; stamens 32–46(–60), white, longer than petals. Main flowering period: late spring to summer, but some flowers may be present in winter or autumn.

### Fruit

Fruit dry, (3–)5-locular, ± 2.5–4 mm wide, flat-topped when valves closed.

### Similar Species

*Kunzea linearis* is distinguished from *K. amathicola* by possessing linear as opposed to ovate to obovate leaves, as well as ± stalkless as opposed to stalked flowers. *Kunzea linearis* also resembles *K. ericoides* which has nearly hairless branchlets furnished with minute, sparse erect hairs, and nearly hairless bright green linear, linear-lanceolate, to narrowly lanceolate leaves, and stalked flowers.

*Kunzea linearis* is distinguished from all other New Zealand members of the *K. ericoides* complex by having linear leaves, spike-like inflorescences bearing sessile flowers, narrow, long, erect, persistent calyx lobes and erect petals.

### Notes

*Kunzea linearis* is a reranking of *K. ericoides* var. *linearis*. Of all the newly recognised species in New Zealand *Kunzea* (de Lange 2014), *K. linearis* is probably the most easily recognised due to clear and constant morphological differences. It has a 2018 conservation status of Threatened – Nationally Vulnerable.

The genus *Kunzea* also occurs in Australia, where it is represented by more than 40 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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