

## NZ Myrtaceae Key - Online edition

# *Kunzea serotina* de Lange & Toelken

### Common Names

kānuka, mākahikatoa

### Origin

New Zealand endemic.

### Cultivation

Cultivated widely, mainly under the name *Kunzea* 'Central North Island'.

### Distribution

Mainly around the Central Volcanic Plateau in the North Island, as well as inland in low-lying areas to alpine situations in the northern South Island of New Zealand.

### Distinguishing Features

- Columnar to pyramidal habit.
- Bark peeling readily, flakes curling (resembling wood shavings).
- Foliage dark green to bronze green.
- Branchlets with copious and persistent, spreading, minute hairs.
- Leaves with distinct juvenile and adult forms.
- Leaf surfaces hairless except for margins and lower (abaxial) midrib.
- Leaves strongly recurved from about ½ of total length.
- Flowers with yellow oil glands.

### Habit

Columnar to pyramidal shrubs or trees to 20 m tall.

### Bark and Stem/Trunk

Bark thin and papery to corky, somewhat stringy, readily peeling and curling (resembling wood shavings). Branchlets with copious and persistent, spreading, minute hairs.

### Leaves

Leaves, alternate, narrowly oblanceolate to obovate, 4–7 mm long, 1–2 mm wide, reddish-green to bronze-green when young, dark glossy green when older, strongly recurved from about ½ of total length, leathery, leaf surfaces mostly hairless with hairs confined to margins and at least the abaxial (lower) midrib; leaf surfaces not puckered; margins entire; tips acute; leaf stalks absent or short.

### Flowers

Flowers borne in compact clusters to 25 mm long, flowers  $\pm$  3–9 mm in diam., stalks present, petals 5, mostly white, oil glands yellow, drying pale yellow to  $\pm$  colourless; sepals 5, tips free, lobes erect, persistent; stamens 20–38, white, longer than petals. Main flowering period: summer, but some flowers may be present in late spring or autumn.

### Fruit

Fruit dry, 3–4(–5)-locular,  $\pm$  1.5–3.5 mm wide, uniformly hairy, flat-topped when valves closed, rarely persistent.

### Similar Species

*Kunzea robusta* is most like *K. serotina* but differs in its larger stature and different growth habit. Also, the flowers of *K. robusta* possess petals with colourless oil glands that dry opaque or grey, while in *K. serotina* the oil glands are yellow, drying pale yellow to  $\pm$  colourless. The fruits of *K. serotina* are smaller (1.5–3.5 mm wide) and normally 3–4-locular while those of *K. robusta* are larger ( $\pm$  3–5 mm wide) and generally have 5, sometimes 6, locules.

Both *K. tenuicaulis* and *K. serotina* have recurved leaves and other similar characteristics, but habitat and habit differ, and fruit of *K. tenuicaulis* are persistent, whereas *K. serotina* fruit are only rarely persistent.

### Notes

*Kunzea serotina* is a recently described species endemic to New Zealand (de Lange 2014). It has a 2018 conservation status of Threatened – Nationally Vulnerable. Relatively widespread, like *K. robusta*, and therefore also variable.

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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