

NZ Myrtaceae Key - Online edition

Neomyrtus pedunculata (Hook.f.) Allan

Synonyms

Myrtus pedunculata Hook.f.

Common Names

myrtle, rōhutu, rōutu

Origin

New Zealand endemic.

Cultivation

Easily propagated from semi hardwood cuttings and fresh seed, but not especially common in nurseries or gardens.

Distribution

Occurring naturally in forest or shrubland throughout most of New Zealand, in the North Island, South Island and Stewart Island.

Distinguishing Features

- Branchlets hairless.
- Branchlets 4-angled.
- Flowers pendulous.
- Flowers small (\pm 6–7 mm in diam.).
- Flowers with 5 petals and sepals.
- Fruit a yellow, red or mainly orange berry.
- Fruit with 1 locule.

Habit

Widely-branched shrubs or trees up to 8 m tall.

Bark and Stem/Trunk

Bark pale-grey to silvery, papery. Young branchlets and stems hairless. Branchlets 4-angled, brittle.

Leaves

Leaves opposite, leathery, ovate to oval or oblong, sometimes broader away from the stalk, 6–20 mm long, 4–15 mm wide, upper surface silver-green to yellow-green, with red to purple spots, lower surface pale silver-green to white, dotted with oil glands, leaf surface flat, not puckered, upper surface hairless, lower surface hairy, becoming hairless with age; margins entire; tips blunt; leaf stalks 3–6 mm long.

Flowers

Flowers mostly solitary, axillary, pendulous, \pm 6–9 mm in diam., flower stalks \pm 10–15 mm long, slender; petals 5, \pm oblong, white, \pm 4–6 mm long; sepals 5, tips free, persistent, with scattered hairs when young, becoming hairless with age, spreading; stamens numerous, white, protruding out from petals. Main flowering period: summer to autumn.

Fruit

Fruit an orange, rarely yellow, or red spherical berry, pendulous, 1-locular, \pm 3.5–5.0 mm wide, calyx lobes small, persistent.

Similar Species

Sometimes confused with *Lophomyrtus obcordata* but *N. pedunculata* has oval or oblong leaves that are sometimes broader away from the stalk, 4-angled branchlets, and 5-parted flowers and usually orange-yellow fruit, whereas *L. obcordata* has heart-shaped leaves, branchlets round in cross-section, 4-parted flowers and red fruit.

Sterile plants of *Teucrium parvifolium* (Lamiaceae) are superficially similar. *Teucrium* has dull, grey-green or brown-green leaves, downy young branches, tiny 5-parted flowers and dry fruit with persistent calyx in leaf axils. All species of *Coprosma* differ in lacking 4-angled branchlets, having tiny stipules between the pair of leaves, while the leaves lack oil gland dots and their undersides possess minute pit domatia in the vein axils. *Coprosma* fruit are either stalkless or shortly stalked.

Notes

The only species in the genus.

Neomyrtus pedunculata was given a conservation status of Threatened – Nationally Critical in 2018.

External Links

- [CitSciHub](#)

- Flora of New Zealand Online
- GBIF
- iNaturalist NZ
- NZPCN

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