

Plate 452 *Fuchsia excorticata*

Agapanthus calyciflorus

tree fuchsia, New Zealand fuchsia, Kotukutuku, Konini (fruit)

Tegadu (Anaura) Bay, New Zealand 20 – 22 October 1769

Tolaga Bay, New Zealand, 23 October - 29 October 1769

Motu aro Island, New Zealand, 29 November and 2 December 1769

Totara nui, New Zealand, 15 January - 6 February 1770



This is the largest of the fuchsia family; up to 15 metres (50 ft) in the wild, but is a small tree or bush in cultivation. It is evergreen in the warmer northern part of its range, but deciduous in colder regions. It is named for the pale orange, papery bark which hangs in strips and shreds on mature trees. The leaves are green, sometimes with a red or purple tinge, and a pale underside. The flowers emerge from the branches and are purple and lime green, changing to red and purple when fertilised. The pollen is bright blue. In New Zealand the flowers are pollinated by birds. Some of the trees are hermaphrodite, and some female.

The wood is very hard and cannot be burned, or easily worked.

The fruits are edible and the sap is sweet and can be sucked. Maori women used the leaves in vapour baths after childbirth. The bark was used in tanning leather and a dye was produced from the berries. There is a tradition of Maori young people smearing the pollen on their faces as a kind of make-up.

Fuchsia excorticata is endemic throughout New Zealand, the Stewart and Chatham Islands. It grows along wooded river valleys and up to an altitude of 1000 metres (3030 ft.). It prefers a moist soil and sheltered position, and does not tolerate frost. This plant is not threatened, but is not widely grown outside New Zealand, and not often in cultivation. In the UK it is sold only by one nursery in Cornwall, although seeds are available online.

In the USA there are online listings for it by two nurseries in the Pacific Northwest.

Fuchsia excorticata is not listed in the catalogue of the Whitby Botanical Garden, nor in the database of the Lindley Library. However, there is now a live specimen in Whitby, in my garden!

Herbariums with specimens:

Swedish Museum of Natural History Department of Botany (S), S-G-5684

Herbarium Russian Academy of Sciences - V. L. Komarov Botanical Institute

Museum Botanicum Hauniense, University of Copenhagen (C), C10016121

Universität Göttingen (GOET), GOET012607

Natural History Museum (BM)

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Sources

'A Catalogue of the plants in the Botanic Garden at Whitby', <https://books.google.co.uk/books>
Biodiversity Heritage Library: <https://www.biodiversitylibrary.org>

Burncoose Nurseries: <https://www.burncoose.co.uk/site/index.cfm>

Edward Rex Lancelot Bartholomew, 'Distribution and demographics of *Fuchsia excorticata*, Nelson Lakes National Park. A thesis submitted to the Victoria University of Wellington in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Science in Ecology and Biodiversity'. <https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/41336063.pdf>

Global Plants database: <https://plants.jstor.org>

Maori Plant Use. Landcare Research: <https://maoriplantuse.landcareresearch.co.nz/>

meaningoftrees.com

New Zealand Plant Conservation Network: nzpcn.org.nz

New Zealand Plants and their Story: The Native Fuchsia:
<http://nzetc.victoria.ac.nz/tm/scholarly/tei-CocNewZ-t1-body1-d11-d2.html>

Plants for A Future database: <https://pfaf.org/user/plantsearch.aspx>

The Plant List WFO: World Flora Online <http://www.worldfloraonline.org>

Royal Horticultural Society: <https://www.rhs.org.uk/education-learning/libraries-at-rhs>

RHS Lindley Library: <http://www.lindleylibrary.org.uk>

Fuchsia excorticata: Wikipedia

Zealandia: visitlandia.com