

Growing Native Forests

Tree of the month

Tawa (*Beilschmiedia tawa*)

Tawa is a native tree, endemic to Aotearoa New Zealand which means it is only found here and nowhere else on the planet. It is common throughout the North Island but limited to the top half of the South Island. In its natural habitat, tawa often grows with podocarp species such as rimu, matai and kahikatea.

Timber properties

Tawa plays a crucial role in the native ecosystem. It has potential as a timber tree when cultivated for harvest. The harvesting of native trees must comply with the Forests Act 1949. Tawa timber is ideal for durable flooring, woodturning, interior joinery, or furniture making. However, it has low durability if left untreated in the ground, lasting less than five years. The timber features a white to pale brown hue, with a fine texture and straight grain.

Growing tawa

Tawa grows slowly and is frost tender when young. It prefers a moist, free draining soil but can tolerate drier conditions.

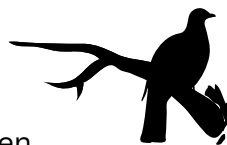


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max. age: 1,000 years



max. height: 35 m



Distribution

Tawa is a favoured food of the **kererū**, who along with the North Island **kōkako**, feast on the fleshy fruit and spread the seed. These birds are the only remaining native species who can digest the large fruits.

Did you know that...

... tawa berries can be steamed in a hāngī for a lengthy period to remove the turpentine flavoured pulp. The dried kernels can be stored for later use as a flavouring.

... the whakatauki "**ka mahi te tawa uho ki te riri**" compares a courageous person to the hardness of the tawa kernel.



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