

Streblus banksii in Northern Rodney

Maureen Young

Streblus banksii (Cheeseman) C.J.Webb in the family Moraceae, the coastal milk tree or ewekuri, is found in coastal and lowland forest from Mangonui to the Marlborough Sounds. It has been in steady decline on the mainland, reputedly because the seed is very palatable to rats, and it is now only common locally on a few islets around Great Barrier (Bec Stanley pers. comm.). It is listed as "Regionally Critical" in Auckland (Stanley et al. 2005).

The trees can grow to 12 metres tall. The leaves range in size from 3.5 – 8.5 cm x 2 – 3.5 cm and have crenate margins. When held up to the light the reticulated veins are very obvious. Juvenile plants can have deeply lobed, or "fiddle leaves", similar to those seen on *S. heterophyllus*, but they don't pass through a twiggly shrub stage.

For some years I have been aware of a sapling of *S. banksii* growing beside the Ecology Trail at Tawharanui Regional Park. Spurred on by DOC and ARC, I recently relocated this tree which had a spray or two of the tiny, insignificant female flowers common to the genus. Park staff have since searched for, and found, seedlings growing in the bush.

Because of the interest shown in this plant I referred to the herbarium held at the Warkworth & Districts Museum, and there I found specimens collected from three more sites in the district. One of these was from a single tree growing near Wilson Road, Wayby, Wellsford, and another was from a juvenile plant growing on the summit of Atuanui (Mt Auckland).

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References

Stanley, R., de Lange, P.J. and Cameron, E.K. (2005). Auckland Regional Threatened and Uncommon Vascular Plant List. *Auckland Botanical Society Journal* 60(2): 152 – 157.

The third was a fruiting specimen that had been collected from one of a group of trees near the Mahurangi Heads. Geoff Davidson had shown an interest in having seed to grow at the Oratia Native Plant Nursery, so I visited these trees again. Driving on the farm road that leads from Martins Bay to the Mahurangi East Regional Park, I relocated three trees growing on the roadside on private property. One tree was bearing some ripe fruit, and the other two were barren – presumably because they are males. They are handsome trees, the largest with a DBH of 32 cm and the smallest with a DBH of 20 cm. The leaves are c. 5 x 3 cm in size. All three trees bear the galls caused by the mite, *Eriophes paratrophis*, which commonly distort the flower spikes of this genus.

Forms intermediate between *S. banksii* and *S. heterophyllus* are occasionally encountered, and these are presumed to be hybrids. Such hybrids have been seen at Tamahunga, Wenderholm Regional Park, Mahurangi Scenic Reserve, and Buckletons Beach.

Barry Green, Senior Ranger of the ARC Northern Parks, has recently found a small population of *S. banksii* at the new ARC Regional Park at Pakiri. This consists of two trees in a small, unfenced patch of bush above the beach, and higher up on a pa site are another two trees - the leaves of all these trees are at the smallest end of the scale. Four trees of *S. heterophyllus* and one hybrid also grow there.

Fatoua pilosa (Moraceae) weedy in New Zealand

Rhys Gardner

Until recently this Asian-Pacific herb, a new weed for the country, had dwelt "under the AK carpet", efforts to determine it having focussed wrongly on Urticaceae – since it is without milky sap, has small flowers with pip-like "seeds", and leaves toothed like an *Urtica* (Fig. 1). However, its curved leaf-hairs do not sting.

The "seed", of *Fatoua*, actually is the fruit, is distinctive. One of the narrow sides of the ovary carries the persistent, very unequally bifid, short-bristly style; the two larger side-faces are regularly yellowish-green and have a low, irregularly pustulate relief (Fig. 1).