



New Zealand Indigenous Flora Seed Bank

Pohutukawa, Rata and the Myrtaceae

In 2010 a new disease, myrtle rust, that attacks species of the family Myrtaceae was found identified in New South Wales. In 2013 Myrtle rust reached New Caledonia and in 2015 it was identified in Tasmania. It is likely to be only a matter of time before it arrives in New Zealand. There are 28 Myrtaceae species in New Zealand including pohutakawa, rata, manuka, kanuka, and several climbers. Two *Metrosideros bartlettii* and *Kunzea toelkenii* are threatened. Myrtaceae are found in every New Zealand forest. The trees are keystone species of our forests, and manuka is a species of economic importance. These species are potentially at risk from the rust disease, for which there is presently no cure. Seed banking of New Zealand Myrtaceae is underway.