

FACT SHEET Native Plant Species of Norfolk Island

Mountain Rush

Freycinetia baueri

Mountain Rush (family *Pandanaceae*), is a critically endangered, native species.

Description

A woody, climbing evergreen plant that inhabits the more mountainous areas of Norfolk Island and the National Park. Its brown stems are long, winding and woody with clear markings where old leaves once grew, and aerial roots emerging along the stem. The plant will climb along banks, up trees and form dense thickets.

Freycinetia can grow long and winding stems that snake along the ground, up trees and around each other. Its name 'screw palm' comes from the nature of the leaves growing in a corkscrew formation up the stem.

Long, narrow pandanus-like leaves grow in a spiral pattern up the stem and appear in 'tufts' at stem ends with multiple, close twisted ranks around the stem. Dark green leaves are long and narrow (up to 1m) with scabrid (toothed but not serrated) edges and midrib.

Flowers emerge from the centre of the leaf 'tuft' at the stem axis with large, orange, fleshy bracts. The plants are dioecious, meaning there are male plants and female plants, and therefore male flowers and female flowers. Female flowers, once pollinated, develop into fruit that contain seed. Multiple fruit can grow from within the same 'tuft'.

Distribution

Mountain Rush grows in native forest, primarily in the National Park and favours areas of high elevation.

Growing conditions

The plant likes protected forest below the canopy. It is often growing on sloped ground.

Look-alikes

There are no look-alikes on Norfolk Island, but it is similar in appearance to other *Freycinetia* species found in New Zealand.

Common names

Norfolk Mountain Rush, Norfolk Screw Palm, *Freycinetia*

Photo credit: Lilli-unna King



Freycinetia fruit



Freycinetia flower



Freycinetia leaf base



Freycinetia whole plant