

Botanical Name: Metrosideros excelsus (M. Tomentosus)

Common Name: New Zealand Christmas Tree, Pohutukawa

Type of Plant: dicot: tree Family Myrtaceae

Habit of Growth:

Overall Shape an evergreen large shrub in youth, single-or multi-trunked, with
ascending primary branching; develops a full oval to rounded canopy as the plant
matures; rather slow-growing at first and shrubby if unpruned

Height 15-30 ft (40 ft) Spread 2/3 to equal Growth Rate slow to moderate

Environment:

Exposure full sun preferred; tolerates some shade at inland locations

Soil prefers well-draining sites

Hardiness tender (Zones 17, 23-24): best-suited to mild coastal habitats

Morphology:

Leaves pinnate. mostly opposite on pale gray fuzzy stems, 2-3" long, oval to
elliptic, leathery, dark green above, pale gray-green and fuzzy beneath

Flowers crimson red, many-stamened (similar to Callistemon), in large rounded
clusters at the ends of branches; mostly in summer

Fruit a woody capsule (similar to Callistemon)

Propagation: seed

Usage: a small accent tree for coastal areas, valued for its heavy display of
showy red flowers and structure if trained; Mediterranean-subtropical
themes; good courtyard or small street tree; also as background screening

Landscape Care:

Watering give an occasional deep soak the first 2 years, then very little needed
thereafter

Fertilizing little needed after establishment (check for chlorosis in lawns)

Pruning as a tree, head high when young and develop primary framework

Pests/Diseases relatively free

Other M. excelsa 'Aurea' produces yellow flowers

Origin: coastal regions of northern New Zealand