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Eugenia maire, the black maire, the maire-tawhake of the Maori.

Of interest is that members of the genus in other countries are important spice and fruit plants, *Eugenia pimenta* furnishes allspice and is

cultivated for that purpose in the West Indies, *Eugenia cauliflora* of Brazil has refreshing greenage size fruits. The dried flowerettes of one species supply cloves. But the New Zealand *Eugenia maire* is not useful for culinary or edible purposes so far as is known.

Eugenia maire is a tree reaching 16 m. It has a smooth white bark, with leaves opposite, oblong lanceolate 2–5cm long and pointed at the tip. Flowers are in terminal panicles 1cm diameter and white. The berry is 1cm diameter and red. It flowers in June and July.

The tree is a lowland type favouring swamplands and semi-swamp damp forest conditions, from the North Island to the Marlborough Sounds and top of the South Island. It is described as having the habit of *Metrosideros* (the ratas) in respect of its flower arrangement.

The wood is generally compact heavy and durable and was used for jetty piles and mooring posts on the Waikato River remaining sound after many years. It was highly valued for fence posts and firewood and by 1880 being so popular as a material the tree was fast becoming scarce it was cut out, and with the draining of the swamplands it died off in many places.

In former days the Maoris used the hard wood to construct their digging spades to break up the soil for kumaras and plants.

It was first described by A. Cunningham in *Annals of Natural*

History 3, 1839 based on collections made from 1826 to 1834 by himself and his brother R. Cunningham.

This small tree is deserving of some attention, it would make a good shrub in moist areas and would repay with glorious blossom and vivid berry fruits in winter months.

DAVID G. COLLINGWOOD

Gallery

OF NEW ZEALAND FLORA



This beautiful small tree is a member of the *Eugenia* Genus which was named in honour of Prince Eugene of Saxony. The genus is one of trees and shrubs growing in the tropical areas of Asia, America and extending into Chile and New Zealand where there is only the one example, our endemic *Eugenia maire*.