

Passiflora tripartita var. mollissima

COMMON NAME

banana passionfruit

FAMILY

Passifloraceae

AUTHORITY

Passiflora tripartita var. *mollissima* (Kunth) Holm-Niels. & P.Jørg.

FLORA CATEGORY

Vascular – Exotic

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Lianes & Related Trailing Plants - Dicotyledons

NVS CODE

PASTVM

CONSERVATION STATUS

Not applicable

HABITAT

Terrestrial. Typically found in shrublands, forest margins, roadsides, wastelands, farm and orchard hedges and domestic gardens. Prefers light gaps on fertile soil, In cooler areas regular frosts and occasional snowfalls appear to limit the plants growth

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Vigorous vine, shoots densely hairy with large persistent stipules. Leaves 3-lobed up to 14 cm long, densely tomentose beneath, at least some hairs above. Flowers are pink with long hypanthium (up to 9 cm) and short petals. Fruit up to about 10 cm long, obovoid, green ripening to orange-yellow and containing edible orange pulp with small black seed.

SIMILAR TAXA

Can be distinguished from *P. tarminiana* by the large persistent stipules, and the long hypanthium on the flower. *P. mixta* is also similar, but has salmon-pink flowers and a pubescent hypanthium. From var. *azuayensis* (q.v.) it is distinguished by having 'leaves moderately to densely pubescent on upper surface' (Heenan & Sykes 2003); var. *azuayensis* has 'leaves glabrous to glabrate on upper surface' (ibid.)

FLOWERING

January, February, March, April, May, June, July, August, September, October, November, December

FLOWER COLOURS

Red/Pink

LIFE CYCLE

Perennial. Few seedlings are present owing to the parent plants combinations of low germination levels (around 25%), high seedling mortality and shading (Buxton 1994). Reproduces from seed and can grow from stem fragments. Moderate seed numbers are produced by the plant. Seed accumulates in the soil seed bank over time, ensuring continuous germination (Williams & Buxton 1995). The fruit is eaten by pigs, possums, kiore, ship rats, Norway rats, and many birds, however it is not known whether the seed remains viable after consumption.

YEAR NATURALISED

1958



Passiflora tripartita. Photographer: Auckland Regional Council, Licence: Public domain.



Seedling. Hayward Scenic Reserve, Lower Hutt. Photographer: Jeremy R. Rolfe, Date taken: 18/12/2006, Licence: CC BY.

ORIGIN

Tropical N. South America

REASON FOR INTRODUCTION

Agricultural

TOLERANCES

The plant is intolerant to deep shade and reprints after grazing and physical damage. Requires medium soil fertility.

ETYMOLOGY

passiflora: Passionflower

NATIONAL PEST PLANT ACCORD SPECIES

This plant is listed in the 2020 National Pest Plant Accord. The National Pest Plant Accord (NPPA) is an agreement to prevent the sale and/or distribution of specified pest plants where either formal or casual horticultural trade is the most significant way of spreading the plant in New Zealand. For up to date information and an electronic copy of the 2020 Pest Plant Accord manual (including plant information and images) visit the [MPI website](#).

REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

Heenan, PB; Sykes, WR 2003. *Passiflora* (Passifloraceae) in New Zealand: a revised key with notes on distribution. *NZ J Botany* 41: 217-221. DOI: [10.1080/0028825X.2003.9512842](https://doi.org/10.1080/0028825X.2003.9512842)

MORE INFORMATION

<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/passiflora-tripartita-var-mollissima/>