Pohutukawa

Metrosideros excelsa

Height: 25 feet

Spread: 40 feet

Sunlight:

Hardiness Zone: 8

Other Names: New Zealand Christmas Tree

Description:

An impressive ornamental tree that may grow quite large, but also be maintained as a shrub or hedge; bright red bottlebrush flowers in winter create a dazzling display; very frost sensitive

Ornamental Features

Pohutukawa features showy red frilly flowers at the ends of the branches from late fall to late winter, which emerge from distinctive white flower buds. It has attractive green evergreen foliage. The oval leaves are highly ornamental and remain green throughout the winter.

Landscape Attributes

Pohutukawa is an evergreen tree with an upright spreading habit of growth. Its average texture blends into the landscape, but can be balanced by one or two finer or coarser trees or shrubs for an effective composition.

This is a relatively low maintenance tree, and should only be pruned after flowering to avoid removing any of the current season's flowers. It has no significant negative characteristics.

Pohutukawa is recommended for the following landscape applications;

- Accent
- Shade
- Hedges/Screening
- General Garden Use



Pohutukawa flowers
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder



Pohutukawa
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder

Planting & Growing

Pohutukawa will grow to be about 25 feet tall at maturity, with a spread of 40 feet. It has a low canopy with a typical clearance of 2 feet from the ground, and is suitable for planting under power lines. It grows at a medium rate, and under ideal conditions can be expected to live for 40 years or more.

This tree should only be grown in full sunlight. It does best in average to evenly moist conditions, but will not tolerate standing water. It may require supplemental watering during periods of drought or extended heat. It is particular about its soil conditions, with a strong preference for rich, acidic soils, and is able to handle environmental salt. It is somewhat tolerant of urban pollution, and will benefit from being planted in a relatively sheltered location. This species is not originally from North America.



Pohutukawa foliage
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder