



# Star Performers

## Lacebarks for autumn

### *Hoheria populnea*

Lacebark, Houhere, Hohere, Hoihere, Houhi, Houhi ongaonga, Houī, Ongaonga, Whauahi, Wheuhi

### *Hoheria sexstylosa*

Lacebark, Graceful Lacebark, Houhere, Houhiongaonga



*Hoheria's* large scented flowers deliver pollen and nectar. Photo Remco Baars© Landcare Research.

Of the seven native species of *Hoheria* (lacebarks, houhere, ribbonwood), two are Star Performers because they flower in autumn during the stark shortage of other flowers. These two species are *Hoheria populnea* and *H. sexstylosa*; both are outstanding trees/shrubs with a profusion of showy white scented flowers. Both contribute abundant pollen and nectar. Although the natural distribution of *H. populnea* is in the upper North Island only, it has spread and naturalised throughout New Zealand from cultivated garden escapes so some consider it a “native weed”. *Hoheria sexstylosa* naturally occurs from the middle of the North Island down through west coast of the South Island. However, since it hybridises with *H. angustifolia* on the east of the South Island, it is unwanted in Canterbury to protect natural populations of *H. angustifolia* from genetic swamping. Apart from the Canterbury issue, these two species are of tremendous value to bees in autumn.

**Pollen:** The flowers of both species are a perfect example of “open dish” flowers with exposed nectar and pollen giving ready access for bees. Each star-shaped flower has many stamens inserted onto petals in ring of clusters around the centre. The numerous stamens, large sized flowers, and high density of flowers add up to abundant pollen on each tree or shrub. Our results for protein content in pollen ranged from 18% to 22%.

**Nectar:** Both species produce plentiful nectar for bees in autumn. Walsh (1967) has reported that *H. populnea* yields abundant nectar in May. In Auckland, the bees even obtain a surplus of nectar from this source in May. The resulting honey is medium amber in colour with a strong but not unpleasant flavour. Ref': Walsh, R.S. 1967. Nectar and pollen sources of New Zealand. Wellington, National Beekeeper Association of New Zealand. (also see Revised edition 1978, Walton, T., Williams, D. Eds.)