

MOIST PALM VALLEY FOREST

The Norfolk Island Vegetation Mapping Project has described and mapped 14 distinct native plant communities on Norfolk Island. This series of fact sheets presents information about each of the communities.

Moist Palm Valley Forest

Thick nee-ow palm and tree fern forest mostly in mountain valleys.

This community occurs in the deep valleys on the mountains, almost entirely within the Norfolk Island National Park. It occurs primarily on the moister, southern side of the mountain, and historically may have extended down to deep lower valleys.

This community is usually a dense stand of nee-ow palm (*Rhopalostylis baueri*), also called Norfolk Island Palm, with the two tree ferns,

smooth tree fern (*Cyathea brownii*) and rough tree fern (*Cyathea australis* ssp. *norfolkensis*), other fern species, and scattered hardwoods including pennantia (*Pennantia endlicheri*). At lower altitudes, on upper slopes and on the northern side of the mountains, hardwoods become more common.

Nee-ow palm can reach 10 metres in height and its bright-red fruit is one of the main foods of the endemic green parrot (*Cyanorhamphus cookii*).



Moist Palm Valley Forest in Norfolk Island National Park. Photo: Kevin Mills

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Plant community	Key species	Other species	Threatened species
Moist Palm Valley Forest	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nee-ow palm (<i>Rhopalostlylis baueri</i>) • Smooth tree fern (<i>Cyathea brownii</i>) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rough tree fern (<i>Cyathea australis norfolkensis</i>) • King fern (<i>Ptisana salicina</i>) • Mountain rush (<i>Freycinetia baueriana</i>) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Norfolk water fern (<i>Blechnum norfolkiana</i>) • Mountain procras (<i>Elatostema montanum</i>) • Pennantia (<i>Pennantia endlicheri</i>) • Phreatia (<i>Phreatia limenophylax</i>)

Indicative species composition

The table above identifies the key species present (those species that are most characteristic of the plant community), other species (additional species that are likely to be present and assist in defining the community), and some of the threatened species present.

Further information

These fact sheets are based on the Norfolk Island Vegetation Mapping Project conducted by the Invasive Species Council between 2018 and 2020. Naomi Christian and Dr Kevin Mills conducted the vegetation surveys, and described and mapped the native plant communities. Two maps were produced – one showing the estimated distribution of native plant communities in 1750, and one showing their distribution in 2020.

The plant community maps are available at:

- www.norfolkisland.gov.nf/services/waste-and-environment/native-vegetation/native-vegetation-mapping-project
- www.invasives.org.au/niveg

There are 180 native plant species on the Norfolk Island Group, of which around 25% are endemic. Forty-six species have been identified as threatened with

extinction. Describing and mapping the 14 native plant communities was done to help land managers protect and restore habitat for these threatened species and other wildlife of Norfolk Island.

Acknowledgements

Funding for these fact sheets was provided by the Norfolk Island Regional Council. The information was obtained as part of a project by the Invasive Species Council and TierraMar, funded by the Lord Mayor's Charitable Foundation through the Eldon and Anne Foote Trust.

Field surveys, analysis and mapping were conducted by Naomi Christian and Dr Kevin Mills and supported by the Norfolk Island

Regional Council, Parks Australia and many generous volunteers and landholders.

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