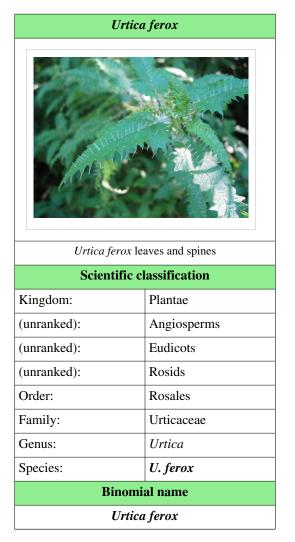
Urtica ferox



Urtica ferox, commonly known as **ongaonga**, is a nettle that is endemic to New Zealand. Sometimes known as the "tree nettle", ongaonga has woody stems and unusually large stinging spines, and can grow 5 metres tall. Even the lightest touch can result in a painful sting that lasts several days.

In Maori folklore, Kupe was said to have placed several obstacles to hinder pursuers whose wives he had stolen, one of which was the ongaonga.

Ongaonga is the main food plant for larvae of the New Zealand red admiral butterfly or kahukura, Vanessa gonerilla.

There has been one recorded human death from contact—a lightly clad hunter who died five hours after walking through a dense patch.^[1] Acute polyneuropathy can occur due to U. ferox stings.^[2]

References

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Further reading

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