May 2025

Fact Sheet

‘Otahuao’
Populus deltoides x P. nigra
NZ 5020

THE NEW ZEALAND
POPLAR & WILLOW RESEARCH TRUST

‘Otahuao’ is a *P. x euramericana* hybrid, resulting from a 1980 NZ cross between *P. deltoides* and *P. nigra* ‘Italica’. It was first released commercially in 1993.









Characteristics

‘Otahuao’ leaves have a straight base and a distinctive undulating or wrinkled leaf margin. The leaves are dark green above and light green below. As a young tree ‘Otahuao’ has smoother bark than the other *P. x euramericana* hybrids.

‘Otahuao’ has a medium sized crown, a heavy stem and occasionally a few heavy branches. ‘Otahuao’ is female.

Uses

‘Otahuao’ is suitable for soil conservation, particularly in eastern regions. It has good wind and drought tolerance and can be used in the lower slopes, below ‘Argyle’ and ‘Veronese’.

‘Otahuao’ is less susceptible to rust than varieties ‘Dudley’ and ‘Selwyn’ - it was the only clone that stayed rust-free in Wairarapa in 2003-04. ‘Otahuao’ is possum palatable.

Performance

In a Wairarapa trial (ann. rainfall 850 mm) of 15 hybrids, ‘Otahuao’ at age 12 had an average dbh of 34 cm (c.f. Weraiti 36 cm, ‘Kawa’ 27 cm), and an average height of 16.1 m (c.f. ‘Weraiti’ 17.9 m, ‘Kawa’ 15.4 m). This resulted in the fourth highest volume index, behind ‘Weraiti’, ‘Argyle’ and ‘Margarita’. At age 12 in Manawatu (ann. rainfall 1200 mm) ‘Otahuao’ dbh averaged 27 cm, and at age 13 in Otago (ann. rainfall 600 mm), average dbh was 21 cm.

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