

# Celmisia argentea

## COMMON NAME

silver cushion mountain daisy

## SYNONYMS

*Celmisia sessiliflora* var. *minor* Petrie

## FAMILY

Asteraceae

## AUTHORITY

*Celmisia argentea* Kirk

## FLORA CATEGORY

Vascular – Native

## ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes

## ENDEMIC GENUS

No

## ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

## STRUCTURAL CLASS

Herbs - Dicotyledonous composites

## NVS CODE

CELARG

## CHROMOSOME NUMBER

2n = 108

## CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2017 | Not Threatened

## PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2012 | Not Threatened

2009 | Not Threatened

2004 | Not Threatened

## DISTRIBUTION

Endemic. South Island: Otago and Southland from Garvie Mountains southwards

## HABITAT

Montane to subalpine damp grassland and boggy places

## WETLAND PLANT INDICATOR STATUS RATING

FACW: Facultative Wetland

Usually is a hydrophyte but occasionally found in uplands (non-wetlands).



Old Man range. January. Photographer: John Smith-Dodsworth, Licence: CC BY-NC.



Lammerlaw Range. Photographer: John Barkla, Licence: CC BY.

## DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Densely branched subshrub forming small cushions or sometimes mats up to  $\pm 200 \times 200$  mm, usually rather shorter; branches up to c. 150 mm long, woody ascending, stout, clad in persistent leaf-remnants; branchlets very close-set,  $\pm 50$  mm. long, erect or ascending. Leaves numerous, very densely imbricate, ascending. Lamina  $\pm 6.0-12.0 \times 0.5-1.5$  mm, coriaceous, linear-subulate, clad on both surfaces in greyish white appressed tomentum, concavo-convex; apex subacute to acute, sometimes subcucullate. Sheath  $\pm$  = lamina, rather broader, pale, membranous, clad in long silky hairs on margins and back, becoming glabrous or nearly so. Capitula sessile or nearly so, terminal, sunk among apical leaves,  $\pm 6-12$  mm diameter; involucre bracts linear-subulate, almost scarious, pale except at dark tip, up to c.10 mm long, glabrous except for a few hairs at tip, midvein distinct. Ray-florets 8-10 mm long, white; tube very slender, limb about lanceolate, 3-4-toothed, veins evident. Disk-florets c. 7 mm long, very narrow-funnelform, teeth minute, triangular. Achenes c.3 mm long, narrow-cylindric, subcompressed, ribs clad in very short ascending hairs. Pappus-hairs up to 6 mm long, white, slender, very finely barbellate

## SIMILAR TAXA

Can only be confused with *Celmisia clavata* and *C. sessiliflora*. From *Celmisia sessiliflora* it is distinguished by its smaller size and much shorter leaves ( $3.0-5.0 \times 0.5-1.5$  mm cf.  $10.0-30.0 \times 1.5-3.0$  mm). *Celmisia clavata* is distinguished from *C. argentea* by the semi-woody and densely leafy clavate branches, and by the erect, rigid, closely imbricating leaves with abruptly narrowed, obtuse apices. However, as noted under *C. clavata* there is much variation within *C. argentea* with plants from Central Otago grading between that species and plants called *C. clavata* on Stewart Island. Further research, perhaps using more discriminating DNA markers is needed to determine if *C. clavata* is truly distinct from *C. argentea*.

## FLOWERING

October - January

## FLOWER COLOURS

White, Yellow

## FRUITING

November - April

## LIFE CYCLE

Pappate cypselae are dispersed by wind (Thorsen et al., 2009).

## PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

Difficult. Best grown from fresh seed but can be grown from cuttings. Should be planted in a free draining, moist soil. Excellent in a pot in an alpine house, or planted in a south-facing rockery. Dislikes humidity and will not tolerate drying out.

## ETYMOLOGY

**celmisia**: Apparently named after Kelmis, one of Idaeian Dactyls, a group of skilled mythical beings associated with the Mother Goddess Rhea in Greek mythology. Kelmis, whose name means 'casting', was a blacksmith and childhood friend of Zeus, son of Rhea and later king of the gods. In Ovid's 'Metamorphoses', Kelmis is described as offending Zeus who turned him into adamant so he was as hard as a tempered blade

**argentea**: Silvery

## WHERE TO BUY

Not commercially available.

## ATTRIBUTION

Description adapted from Allan (1961)

## REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

Allan, H.H. 1961: Flora of New Zealand. Vol. I, Government Printer, Wellington.

Thorsen, M. J.; Dickinson, K. J. M.; Seddon, P. J. 2009. Seed dispersal systems in the New Zealand flora. Perspectives in Plant Ecology, Evolution and Systematics 2009 Vol. 11 No. 4 pp. 285-309

## MORE INFORMATION

<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/celmisia-argentea/>