

Celmisia rigida

SYNONYMS

Celmisia verbascifolia ssp. *rigida* (Kirk) D.R.Given; *Celmisia petiolata* var. *rigida* Kirk

FAMILY

Asteraceae

AUTHORITY

Celmisia rigida (Kirk) Cockayne

FLORA CATEGORY

Vascular – Native

ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes

ENDEMIC GENUS

No

ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Herbs - Dicotyledonous composites

NVS CODE

CELRIG

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2017 | At Risk – Naturally Uncommon | Qualifiers: DP, Sp

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2012 | At Risk – Naturally Uncommon | Qualifiers: IE, Sp

2009 | At Risk – Naturally Uncommon

2004 | Range Restricted

DISTRIBUTION

Endemic. Stewart Island: Lords River; Masons Bay area including Ernest Islands; Ruggedy Mountains; Long Island; Whenuakou (Codfish Island).

HABITAT

Mostly coastal. On steep slopes and cliffs on ledges, in crevices and under *Olearia* scrub. Occasionally recorded from coastal river banks

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Woody-based herb with short branchlets arising from a multicapital stock, usually just below the soil surface; living leaves in few to numerous rosettes at the tips of branchlets; the whole plant forming a loose mat of a few to numerous rosettes. Leaf sheaths densely imbricate and compacted into a pseudostem. Leaf lamina up to 60-220 × 12-70 mm, coriaceous though often flaccidly so, leaves usually at first erect, becoming decumbent with age, elliptic, oblong, or occasionally obovate; upper surface sometimes obscurely sulcate, concolorous, pale to mid-green glabrate above when mature except for a marginal rim of brown hairs; lower surface lustrous, finely and densely covered in cream-coloured tomentum, veins distinct; tip acute; margins entire, flat, with a very narrow rim of hairs slightly darker than those of lower surface; base obliquely cuneate; petiole usually < ¼ length of lamina, deep purple, clad in floccose, whitish hairs. Scape purple, clad in whitish tomentum, up to 400 mm long; bracts numerous, erect, linear sometimes leaf-like; monocephalous. Capitula up to 60 mm diameter. Involucral bracts tomentosa, indument buff-coloured, glabrate, in several series, linear-subulate, erect, glabrate to silky tomentose. Ray florets 70-80, ligulate, the limb linear-lanceolate, white. Disc florets c. 130-170, funneliform, yellow; tube with eglandular, biseriate hairs. Achene fusiform-cylindric, ribbed, 4-5 mm long, glabrous or with scattered bifid hairs. Pappus unequal, c. 6 mm long, of c. 20-30 bristles.



Doughboy Bay, Stewart Island. Photographer: Melissa Hutchison, Date taken: 26/01/2021, Licence: CC BY-NC.

SIMILAR TAXA

Celmisia rigida differs from *C. verbascifolia* by the rigidly coriaceous rather than flaccid coriaceous to submembranous leaves; leaf margins which are fringed in dark brownish rather than buff-coloured hairs, by the distinct rather than inconspicuous leaf veins and by the leaf undersides which are finely covered in appressed, cream-coloured lustrous hairs. (Given 1984) treated *Celmisia rigida* as a subspecies of *C. verbascifolia* but that view has not been widely adopted by New Zealand botanists who prefer to maintain *C. rigida* as a distinct species.

FLOWERING

November - January

FLOWER COLOURS

White, Yellow

FRUITING

December - March

PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

Easily grown from fresh seed but difficult to maintain. Dislikes high humidity. Best in a shaded site planted in a moist free draining soil.

THREATS

A Naturally Uncommon, narrow range endemic that is abundant within its few known locations. Some Stewart Island populations may be affected by white-tailed deer but most seem secure. It is abundant on Whenuahou (Codfish Island).

ETYMOLOGY

celmisia: Apparently named after Kelmis, one of Idaean 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

rigida: Rigid

WHERE TO BUY

Not Commercially available.

ATTRIBUTION

Description based on Given (1984)

REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

Given, D.R. 1984: A taxonomic revision of *Celmisia* subgenus *Pelliculatae* section *Petiolatae* (Compositae—Astereae). New Zealand Journal of Botany 22: 139-158.

MORE INFORMATION

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