

Olearia hectorii

HECTOR'S TREE DAISY

Olearia hectorii is one of eight rare *Olearia* species included in the Small-leaved Tree Daisy National Recovery Plan. A separate fact sheet is available for each species. The aim of the factsheets is to encourage public awareness of these distinctive New Zealand species and to find compatible ways of managing the places where they exist. A first step towards this is to help people recognise the plants and take an interest in their welfare.

Description

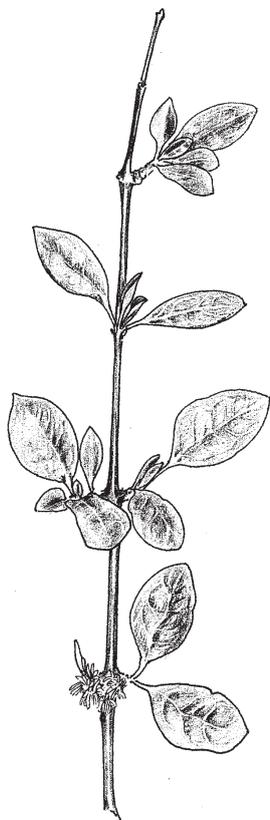
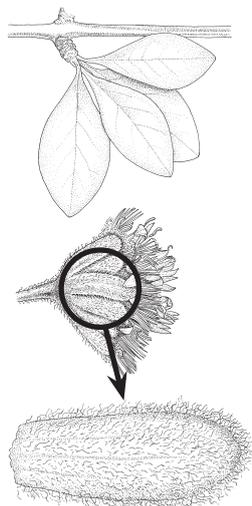
Olearia hectorii is a deciduous tree up to 9.5 m tall, with deeply furrowed, cork-like, fawn bark on the trunk and older branches. Young branches and branchlets are bronze-red with four ribs that produce a squarish cross-section, and have smooth bark. Leaves are arranged in clusters of opposite pairs that are pale moss-green, thin, ovate to elliptic in shape, hairy when young and are 20-60mm long x 7-17 mm wide. Flowers occur in clusters of two to six, any time from October to early December, and flowering may commence before the new leaves appear.

Similar Plants

The largish leaves means it has similarities only with *Olearia fragrantissima* in the *Olearia* group. In winter its leafless state, form and bark are similar to elderberry. It is often associated with lowland ribbonwood and kowhai.

Habitat

Olearia hectorii primarily occupies wet, cold valley floors and hill slopes, often where mountain and hill-country streams disgorge onto the plains. It also occurs as a riparian and forest margin species in some lowland areas. It appears to favour open sites that are (or were) canopy gaps at the margins of primary forest and streamsides. It



Sketches not to scale





relies on natural disturbance (including flooding, sedimentation and erosion) to provide suitable seedling establishment sites. It can live for up to 150 years and it supports at least 22 moth species.

Distribution

Olearia hectorii is restricted to the eastern South Island after previously North Island populations were renamed as *Olearia gardneri*. It has a disjunct or discontinuous distribution, occurring in Marlborough and then South Canterbury and throughout Otago and Southland. Historical records show it previously occurred in the gaps of its South Island distribution including eastern and southern Nelson and Northern Marlborough.

Population Size

Total population size is approximately 4500 individuals, known from approximately 90 sites. The largest population occurs in the Clarence catchment in Marlborough, where approximately 2000 plants are known. Two other relatively large populations consist of 600 plants in the Matukituki Valley and 300 plants in the Upper Waikaia Valley of Southland. Regeneration and recruitment are more-or-less absent in Canterbury, Otago and Southland (at least over the last few decades), but occurs in the populations of Marlborough.

Reference

Rogers, G.M., 1996, Aspects of the ecology and conservation of the threatened tree *Olearia hectorii* in New Zealand. NZ Journal of Botany, 1996, Vol. 34:227-240



Photos by John Barkla. Sketches Lloyd Esler by Rebecca Wagstaff.

National Threat Status and Threats

Nationally Vulnerable. Threats include habitat loss and fragmentation, animal browsing, weed invasion, lack of seedling recruitment, loss of old trees and lack of natural disturbance regimes.

How Can I help?

Learn to recognise the plant.

Tell staff at the Department of Conservation if you discover populations of the plant or suspect you have.

Explore ways to protect populations of the plant through covenanting, fencing weed control and supplementary planting.

Use locally sourced plants in gardens, shelterbelts, riparian/river works and revegetation projects.

Further Information

For more information visit the New Zealand Plant Conservation Network web site: www.nzpcn.org.nz

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