Abrotanella caespitosa

BIOSTATUS
Native – Endemic taxon

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS
2023 | Not Threatened
Jump to previous conservation statuses

CATEGORY
Vascular

STRUCTURAL CLASS
Herbs - Dicotyledonous composites

DETAILED DESCRIPTION
Mat forming herb, up to 1 m or more across. Branching and rooting stems with very small leafy rosettes; stock rather stout; Leaves rosulate, at nodes, (6-) 10-15 × 1-1.5 mm, narrow-linear, obtuse, spreading to recurved, coriaceous, mottled dark green. Peduncles (sunk among the leaves at stem tips when ripening stalks elongate) up to 10 mm long in fruit, with 1-2 short linear bracts or nude. Capitula up to 2-4 mm diameter; phyllaries 6-8, approximately 2 mm long, broad-oblong, obtuse, veins often obscure, margins scarious. Florets 6-8, not strongly dimorphic; achenes approximately 2 mm. long, fusiform to obovoid, glabrous, obscurely ribbed to smooth.

SIMILAR TAXA
Could be confused with *A. fertilis,* which has longer (20 mm) peduncles when in fruit.

DISTRIBUTION
North and South Islands. Ruahine and Tararua Range, Mount Taranaki in the North; widespread from Kahurangi to Fiordland National parks in the South.

HABITAT
Montane to subalpine 900-1800m Often common but inconspicuous in bogs and permanently wet hollows, including snowbanks.

GENUS
Abrotanella

FAMILY
Asteraceae

AUTHORITY
Abrotanella caespitosa Petrie ex Kirk

ENDEMIC TAXON
Yes

ENDEMIC GENUS
No

ENDEMIC FAMILY
No

FLOWERING
October-February



Developing fruit. Mount Climie, Upper Hutt. Photographer: Jeremy R. Rolfe, Date taken: 02/02/2013, Licence: CC BY.


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FRUITING
November-March

LIFE CYCLE AND DISPERSAL
Cypselae are primarily dispersed by wind (Thorsen et al., 2009).

WETLAND PLANT INDICATOR STATUS RATING
FACW: Facultative Wetland
Usually is a hydrophyte but occasionally found in uplands (non-wetlands).

PLANT OF THE MONTH
This plant has been featured as a Plant of the Month – see Trilepidea: NZPCN newsletter for October 2016 for the full story.

ETYMOLOGY
abrotanella: Little Artemisia (known as Abrotanus by ancient herbalists)
caespitosa: From the Latin caespes 'tuft' or 'sod of turf', meaning growing in tufts or patches

NVS CODE
ABRCAE

CHROMOSOME NUMBER
2n = 18

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES
2017 | Not Threatened
2012 | Not Threatened
2009 | Not Threatened
2004 | Not Threatened
Jump to current conservation status

REGIONAL CONSERVATION STATUSES
Otago: 2025 | Regionally Not Threatened | Qualifiers: TL Help
The regional threat classification system leverages off the national assessments in the NZTCS, providing information relevant for the regional context. Otago conservation status information is sourced from the "Conservation Status of Indigenous Vascular Plants in Otago, 2025" Jarvie S et al. (2025) report.

REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING
Allan, H. H. 1961. *Flora of New Zealand. Vol. 1.* Wellington: Government Printer. 693 pp.
Mark, A. F. 2012. *Above the Treeline: A Nature Guide to Alpine New Zealand*. Craig Potton Publishing, Nelson. 199 pp.
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 11(4):* 285-309.

ATTRIBUTION
Description adapted by M. Ward from Mark (2012) and Allan (1961).
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MORE INFORMATION
https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/abrotanella-caespitosa/

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