Abrotanella inconspicua

BIOSTATUS
Native – Endemic taxon

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

CATEGORY
Vascular

STRUCTURAL CLASS
Herbs - Dicotyledonous composites

FLOWER COLOURS
Cream, Yellow

DETAILED DESCRIPTION
Forming moss-like patches 10 cm or more across, bright-green. Stock rather stout, multiple heads, emitting on short stolons densely clad in imbricate leaves, branches up to 3 cm. long; Leaves close-set along branches, 6-10 × 1 mm, coriaceous, erect to patent, awl-shaped, curved at tip, narrowly linear to linear-oblong to subulate-oblong, subacute, ciliolate near sheathing base; midrib prominent. Capitula solitary, approximately 3 mm. diameter, subsessile, invested by leaves, barely extend beyond them as the fruits ripen; phyllaries up to 3 mm long, linear-oblong, obtuse, scarious, nerves usually prominent. Florets 15-20; female with slender corolla-tube, 4-lobed; disk-florets sub-funnelform, usually 5-lobed. Achenes approximately 1-2 mm long, linear-clavate, distinctly to obscurely 4-ribbed, pubescent to glabrous.



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



Pisa Range. Photographer: Colin C. Ogle, Date taken: 01/01/1992, Licence: CC BY-NC.

SIMILAR TAXA
Similar to *A. patearoa* which has broader (1.5-2 mm) blunt leaves and flower stalks that elongate beyond the leaves as the fruits ripen.

DISTRIBUTION
South Island, widespread on the higher mountains of Central Otago and the lakes district but extending west locally, to the Southern Alps in places.

HABITAT
Low to High-Alpine 1200-2000 metres, in boggy ground in cushionfield vegetation, but not the most exposed sites and late snowbanks. Further west, it occurs locally in exposed snow tussock-herbfield and fellfield.

GENUS
Abrotanella

FAMILY
Asteraceae

AUTHORITY
Abrotanella inconspicua Hook.f.

ENDEMIC TAXON
Yes

ENDEMIC GENUS
No

ENDEMIC FAMILY
No

FLOWERING
October-February

FRUITING
November-March

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

ETYMOLOGY
abrotanella: Little Artemisia (known as Abrotanus by ancient herbalists)
inconspicua: Inconspicous

NVS CODE
ABRINC

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. pg. 695.
Mark, A. F. 2012. Above the Treeline: A Nature Guide to Alpine New Zealand. Craig Potton Publishing, Nelson. pg. 198.
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.

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

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