

Aciphylla dobsonii

COMMON NAME

Dobson's speargrass

FAMILY

Apiaceae

AUTHORITY

Aciphylla dobsonii Hook.f.

FLORA CATEGORY

Vascular – Native

ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes

ENDEMIC GENUS

No

ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Herbs - Dicotyledons other than Composites

NVS CODE

ACIDOB

CHROMOSOME NUMBER

2n = 22

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2017 | Not Threatened | Qualifiers: DP

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2012 | Not Threatened

2009 | Not Threatened

2004 | Not Threatened

DISTRIBUTION

Endemic. South Island, higher greywacke montane to subalpine areas of south Canterbury to north Otago.

HABITAT

Confined to fellfield, (1500-2200 m.a.s.l.) especially along exposed ridge crests, where it may be the most conspicuous plant.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Distinctive stocky herb, close-set rosettes up to 150 mm in diameter forming a cushion-like plant up to 1 m across, taproot up to 20 mm diameter, deeply descending. **Leaf-sheaths** approximately 50 x 15 mm, thick, rigid; margins cartilaginous. **Stipules** approximately 20 mm long, approximately 3 mm wide at base, tapering to a hard sharp point. **Lamina** rigid, coriaceous, slightly longer than stipules, with spinose apex approximately 10cm long. **Flowering stems** stout, grooved, up to approximately 30 cm tall including the subcapitate inflorescence. Primary rays 4-5, short, stout; **umbels** and umbellules crowded; **bract-sheaths** up to 40 x 20 mm, with stipules and lamina up to 50 mm long and 9 mm wide at base. **Fruit** narrow-oblong, up to 3.5 mm long; mericarps 4-5 winged.

SIMILAR TAXA

Aciphylla leighii smaller plant than *A. dobsonii*; leaves are only about 5 cm long, leaf tips are generally more blunt, peduncles are rather slender compared to stout in *A. dobsonii*.

FLOWERING

December - January



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



Mt St Bathans, Otago. Photographer: John Barkla, Licence: CC BY.

FRUITING

February – March

LIFE CYCLE

Winged schizocarps are dispersed primarily by wind (Thorsen et al., 2009).

PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

Difficult. Possibly due to the large lengthy taproot and need for scree habitat (Dawson & LeComte).

ETYMOLOGY

aciphylla: From the Latin acicula 'needle' and the Greek phyllum 'leaf', meaning needle-leaf.

dobsonii: Dobson: After Mount Dobson near Lake Tekapo, the type location for this species.

ATTRIBUTION

Description adapted by M. Ward from Allan (1961).

REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

Allan, H. H. 1961. Flora of New Zealand. Vol. 1. Wellington: Government Printer. pg. 469-470.

Dawson, J.W. LeComte, J.R. 1978. Research on Aciphylla - a progress report. Tuatara 23: pg. 49-67.

Mark, A. F. 2012. Above the Treeline: A Nature Guide to Alpine New Zealand. Craig Potton Publishing, Nelson. pg. 150.

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/aciphylla-dobsonii/>