

Aciphylla glaucescens

BIOSTATUS

Native – Endemic taxon

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2023 | Not Threatened | Qualifiers: DPS, DPT

[Jump to previous conservation statuses](#)

CATEGORY

Vascular

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Herbs - Dicotyledons other than Composites

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Large, tufted tussock forming clumps as single or several plants up to 1.5 m tall. **Leaves** 2-3-pinnate, glaucous or greyish green, flaccid, up to 1.5 m long; margins serrulate-crenulate, tapering to pungent apex approximately 5 mm long. Sheath up to 20 cm or more long, approximately 7 cm at base. **Stipules** 3-1-foliolate, central leaflet stout, 30-100 mm long with sheaths up to 50 x 20 mm. **Petioles** ribbed, up to approximately 350 mm x 15 mm, smooth; petiolules up to 100 mm long; lower internodes approximately 50 mm long. **Primary pinnae** up to 200 mm x 4-5 mm; secondary pinnae up to 200 mm x 4 mm; terminal leaflet up to 450 mm long (sometimes not developed). **Flowering stems** of male plants strongly ribbed, 1.5-2 m x 7 cm. Inflorescences up to approximately 40 cm long, narrow-oblong, tapering. **Bracts** numerous, starting from near base of stem; sheaths yellow, 50-120 mm x 4 mm; stipules pinnate to simple, up to 50 mm long; lamina 3-1-pinnate, of lower bracts up to 40 cm long, not reflexed. **Umbels** exceeding bracts, on rather slender peduncles bearing umbellules near base and at apex; involucre bracts linear. **Flowering stems** of female plants up to 2 m tall; **bracts** partly concealing umbels; involucre bracts narrow-lanceolate, approximately 8 mm long; inflorescence generally similar to that of male, but denser. **Fruit** approximately 6-9.5 mm long, mericarps with 3-4(-5) wings.

SIMILAR TAXA

Aciphylla squarrosa var. *squarrosa* may be mistaken for an immature smaller example of this species, generally only 1m tall.

DISTRIBUTION

Endemic. North and South Islands, Mount Hikurangi south to Dunsdale.

HABITAT

Coastal to Low-alpine (up to 1400 m.a.s.l.) stream-sides, wet and shady banks or depressions, mixed tussock-scrub and grassland.

GENUS

Aciphylla

FAMILY

Apiaceae

AUTHORITY

Aciphylla glaucescens W.R.B.Oliv.

TAXONOMIC NOTES

Dawson & LeComte suggest this species is part of the group with clear juice.



Coal Creek. Photographer: John Barkla, Licence: CC BY.



Mt Bee, Southland (inflorescence detail).
Photographer: Jesse Bythell, Licence: CC BY-NC.

ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes

ENDEMIC GENUS

No

ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

FLOWERING

November - January

FRUITING

December – February (-June)

LIFE CYCLE AND DISPERSAL

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

ETYMOLOGY

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

glaucescens: Becoming glaucous

NVS CODE

ACIGLA

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2017 | Not Threatened | Qualifiers: DP

2012 | Not Threatened

2009 | Not Threatened

2004 | Not Threatened

[Jump to current conservation status](#)

REGIONAL CONSERVATION STATUSES

Otago: 2025 | Regionally At Risk – Regionally Declining | Qualifiers: TL, DPT 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. 482.

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. 140.

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

Webb, C. J. & Simpson, M. J. A. 2001. Seeds of New Zealand Gymnosperms and Dicotyledons. Christchurch: Manuka Press. pg. 46.

ATTRIBUTION

Description adapted by M. Ward from Allan (1961), Mark (2012) and Webb & Simpson (2001).

Some of this factsheet information is derived from [Flora of New Zealand Online](#) and is used under a [Creative Commons Attribution 3.0 New Zealand](#) licence.

MORE INFORMATION

<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/aciphylla-glaucescens/>

PDF DATE

27 May 2026