

# Aciphylla similis

## BIOSTATUS

Native – Endemic taxon

## CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2023 | Not Threatened | Qualifiers: DPS

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## CATEGORY

Vascular

## STRUCTURAL CLASS

Herbs - Dicotyledons other than Composites

## FLOWER COLOURS

Cream, Yellow

## DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Rosettes clustered in groups of 10 or more, up to 200 mm diameter. Leaves up to 230 mm long, yellow-green, more or less rhombic on outline, coriaceous, with 6-7(or more) leaflet pairs, mainly in one plane; sheath 60 x 6-15 mm, sheath joint evident; stipules 40 x 1 mm, petiole 80 x 4 mm, concave or flat above, margins rounded, pulvinus up to 5 mm long, conspicuous; lowermost leaflet up to 65 x 3-3.5 mm, apex acute, spine 2 mm long, midrib obscure, marginrib 0.2 mm wide, veins scarcely raised. Inflorescences broad. Female inflorescence up to 400 mm long, stem 300 x 5.5 mm, yellow or brown, head 100 x 90 mm, profile somewhat obdeltate; compound umbels up to 14, arranged in 2-3 whorls, with the terminal umbel the largest; lower bracts 55 mm long with a subtending sheath 23 x 6 mm, stipules and 2 pairs of leaflets; upper bracts smaller, undivided with stipules. Lower compound umbels up to 80 mm long, peduncles 60 x 1 mm, primary bracteoles simple, 10 x 0.5 mm; simple umbels 7 or less, peduncles 16 x 1 mm; secondary bracteoles simple, 6 x 0.5 mm, bearing 12 or less flowers per umbel, pedicels 3 x 0.2 mm. Sepals 0.6 mm; petals 1.2 x 0.6 mm, cream or pale yellow, not inflexed; staminodes 0.3 mm long. Male inflorescences 300 mm or less, stem 170 x 4 mm, yellow; head 130 x 90 mm, ovate, more or less terete; compound umbels about 10, 2-3 whorled, terminal umbel > than lower laterals; bracts similar to female inflorescences; lower compound umbels 90 mm or less, peduncles 70 x 2 mm; primary bracteoles 15 x 1.5 mm; 15 or less, undivided, peduncles 10 x 1 mm; secondary bracteoles 5 x 0.2 mm; umbels bearing 15 or less flowers; pedicels 3 x 0.1 mm or less. Sepals 0.6 mm; petals 1.5 x 1 mm or less, cream or pale yellow, not inflexed; stamens 2 mm long. Mericarps 4.2 x 1.6 mm, dull pale brown, lateral ribs 0.3 mm wide; style up to 1.3 mm long.

## SIMILAR TAXA

Most readily confused with *A. monroi* Hook.f. which is mainly found further north and east of the main range of *A. similis*. Both species overlap north and east of the Lewis Pass where distinctions can sometimes be blurred (possibly due to hybridism). From *A. monroi*, *A. similis* differs by its larger leaves (up to 230 cf 180 mm) and inflorescences (up to 400 cf 300 mm long). *A. similis* also has more and broader leaflets (6-7 pairs cf. 4-5) that are yellow-green rather than grey-green (sometimes tinged yellow), and which are flattened in one plane rather than leaves which are somewhat folded upwards.

## DISTRIBUTION

Endemic. South Island, along the main divide from the Lewis Pass south to the Two Thumb Range. Also found in Westland on mountain ranges such as the Hohonu.



Arthur's Pass National Park. Photographer: Jane Gosden, Date taken: 07/02/2013, Licence: CC BY-NC-SA.



Arthur's Pass National Park. Photographer: Jane Gosden, Date taken: 07/02/2013, Licence: CC BY-NC-SA.

## HABITAT

Subalpine to alpine (900-1100 m a.s.l.) in open ground, usually in Rytidosperma dominated grassland or amongst open tall tussocks, often found in such vegetation types in ablation hollows or on stony well drained soils.

## GENUS

Aciphylla

## FAMILY

Apiaceae

## AUTHORITY

Aciphylla similis Cheeseman

## SYNONYMS

None

## ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes

## ENDEMIC GENUS

No

## ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

## FLOWERING

November - February

## FRUITING

December - April

## LIFE CYCLE AND DISPERSAL

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

## PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

Easily grown in pots in an alpine house and does well in most situations except in climates prone to high humidity. Requires a free draining soil and a sunny situation, flowers best following a cold winter.

## ETYMOLOGY

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

**similis:** Similar to another species

## NVS CODE

ACISIM

## CHROMOSOME NUMBER

2n = 22

## PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2017 | Not Threatened | Qualifiers: DP

2012 | Not Threatened

2009 | Not Threatened

2004 | Not Threatened

[Jump to current conservation status](#)

## REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

Dawson, J. W. 1979: *Aciphylla montana* Armstrong, *A. lecomtei* sp. nov., and related species. *New Zealand Journal of Botany* 17: 339-351.

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: 285-309

**ATTRIBUTION**

Fact Sheet prepared for NZPCN by P.J. de Lange 28 May 2006: Description adapted from Dawson (1979).

**MORE INFORMATION**

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

**PDF DATE**

27 May 2026