

# Cardamine forsteri

## COMMON NAMES

bittercress

## BIOSTATUS

Native – Endemic taxon

## CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2023 | Not Threatened

[Jump to previous conservation statuses](#)

## CATEGORY

Vascular

## STRUCTURAL CLASS

Herbs - Dicotyledons other than Composites

## SIMPLIFIED DESCRIPTION

An erect perennial herb arising from single rosette or several rosettes with short lateral branches. Leaves deeply lobed; moderately hairy to hairless. Hairs, if present, retrorse; Inflorescence a simple raceme or branched, each raceme being 3–6-flowered. Petals narrow (cf. many other *Cardamine* species), 3.0–4.5 × 0.7–1.4 mm, white. Siliques ('seed pods') hairless to moderately hairy; hairs retrorse.

## FLOWER COLOURS

White

## SIMILAR TAXA

Many *Cardamine* species are superficially similar. Heenan (2017) notes "The presence of axillary leaflet hydathodes is an important character of *C. forsteri*. However, their presence can vary as they are caducous and so careful searching of the leaf axils is often needed to locate persistent hydathodes, especially on older leaves." *C. forsteri* also resembles the exotic *C. hirsuta* and can grow with it in disturbed sites. *C. hirsuta* flowers usually have 4 stamens rather than 6.

## DISTRIBUTION

Widespread in New Zealand

## GENUS

Cardamine

## FAMILY

Brassicaceae

## AUTHORITY

*Cardamine forsteri* Govaerts

## SYNONYMS

Was once included under the name of *C. debilis* as Cardamine "Narrow Petal".

## ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes

## ENDEMIC GENUS

No

## ENDEMIC FAMILY

No



Cobb Valley. Photographer: Jeremy R. Rolfe, Date taken: 18/03/2016, Licence: CC BY.



Hydathodes in leaflet axils (circled) are tiny and often caducous (falling off at an early stage). Cobb Valley. Photographer: Jeremy R. Rolfe, Date taken: 18/03/2016, Licence: CC BY.

## ETYMOLOGY

**cardamine:** From the Greek name kárdamon, referring to an Indian spice

## NVS CODE

CARFRS

## PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUS

2017 | Not Threatened

[Jump to current conservation status](#)

## REGIONAL CONSERVATION STATUSES

Auckland: 2025 | Regionally At Risk – Regionally Declining | Qualifiers: DPR, DPS, DPT, PF Help

The regional threat classification system leverages off the national assessments in the NZTCS, providing information relevant for the regional context. Auckland conservation status information is sourced from the [“Conservation status of vascular plant species in Tāmaki Makaurau / Auckland”](#) Simpkins E et al. (2025) report.

Otago: 2025 | Regionally Not Threatened 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

Heenan PB. 2017. A taxonomic revision of *Cardamine* L. (Brassicaceae) in New Zealand. *Phytotaxa* 330(1): 1–154.  
<https://doi.org/10.11646/phytotaxa.330.1>.

## MORE INFORMATION

<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/cardamine-forsteri/>

## PDF DATE

27 May 2026