Celmisia alpina

COMMON NAMES
mountain daisy

BIOSTATUS
Native – Endemic taxon

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

CATEGORY
Vascular

STRUCTURAL CLASS
Herbs - Dicotyledonous composites

FLOWER COLOURS
White, Yellow

DETAILED DESCRIPTION
Tufted herb arising from a usually, much divided and closely branched woody stock up to c.60 mm long, pseudo-stems up to c. 20 mm long, close-set. Leaves very narrow-linear, subcoriaceous; lamina ± 15-30 × (0•5)-0.75-1 mm; upper surface canaliculate, grey-green, ± glabrous; lower densely clad in appressed soft white tomentum, midrib evident; apex acute, often shortly apiculate; margins strongly recurved, entire, narrowed to glabrous, pale, thin sheath c.10 × 1 mm, with evident midrib. Scape 30-50 mm long, very slender, finely grooved, ± clad in deciduous floccose hairs; bracts almost filiform, ascending, up to 10 mm long. Capitula 15-20 mm diameter. Involucral bracts 2-seriate, scarious, midrib evident, margins sparingly hairy, tips acute, dark; outer series c.7 mm long, narrow-ovate; inner c.9 mm long, narrowly linear-subulate to narrow-lanceolate. Ray-florets ± 12 mm long, white, tube very slender, limb widening to apex; disk-florets ± 5 mm long, tubular to very narrowly funnelform, teeth narrow-triangular. Achenes narrow-cylindric, finely ribbed, c. 2.5-3.0 mm long, glabrous. Pappus-hairs white, slender, up to 5 mm long, very finely barbellate



Photographer: Jane Gosden, Date taken: 16/02/2017, Licence: CC BY-NC.



Photographer: Jane Gosden, Date taken: 13/11/2022, Licence: CC BY-NC.

SIMILAR TAXA
Celmisia alpina is part of the C. gracilenta - C. graminifolia complex. This complex is in urgent need of revision. Allan (1961) evidently thought it most similar to C. graminifolia, from which he distinguished it by its much narrower leaves (dimensions given....not > c.1 mm wide cf. ...not < c.4 mm wide for C. graminifolia). In the field Celmisia alpina is chiefly recognised by its much smaller size and very narrow-linear leaves. Similar forms known as C. setacea Colenso (a name sometimes used by botanists) occur in the North Island (and probably the South Island too). They deserve further study.

DISTRIBUTION
Endemic. South and Stewart Islands: Widespread. Similar forms occur in the North Island.

HABITAT
montane to alpine. In mires and bogs and other similar poorly draining surfaces in herbfield, fell-field and subalpine shrubland.

GENUS
Celmisia

FAMILY
Asteraceae

AUTHORITY
Celmisia alpina (Kirk) Cheeseman

SYNONYMS
Celmisia longifolia var. alpina Kirk

ENDEMIC TAXON
Yes

ENDEMIC GENUS
No

ENDEMIC FAMILY
No

FLOWERING
November - December

FRUITING
January - April

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

PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE
Easily grown from fresh seed and by the division of established plants. One of the few Celmisia that does well in cultivation. As with most Celmisia dislikes humidity and will not long tolerate drying out.

WETLAND PLANT INDICATOR STATUS RATING
OBL: Obligate Wetland
Almost always is a hydrophyte, rarely in uplands (non-wetlands).

ETYMOLOGY
celmisia: Apparently named after Kelmis, one of Idaean Dactyls, a group of skilled mythical beings associated with the Mother Goddess Rhea in Greek mythology. Kelmis, whose name means ‘casting’, was a blacksmith and childhood friend of Zeus, son of Rhea and later king of the gods. In Ovid’s ‘Metamorphoses’, Kelmis is described as offending Zeus who turned him into adamant so he was as hard as a tempered blade
alpina: From the Latin alpes ‘the Alps’, refers to plants growing in mountainous areas

MANAAKI WHENUA ONLINE INTERACTIVE KEY
Key to Celmisia in New Zealand

NVS CODE
CELALP

CHROMOSOME NUMBER
2n = 216

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 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. I, Government Printer, Wellington.

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 from Allan (1961)

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/celmisia-alpina/

PDF DATE

09 July 2026