

Celmisia clavata

COMMON NAMES

Stewart Island silver cushion daisy

BIOSTATUS

Native – Endemic taxon

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2023 | At Risk – Naturally Uncommon | Qualifiers: RR

[Jump to previous conservation statuses](#)

CATEGORY

Vascular

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Herbs - Dicotyledonous composites

FLOWER COLOURS

White, Yellow

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Densely branched, semi-woody, subshrub forming small forming loose patches, cushions or mats up to 700 × 100 mm; branches up to 400 mm long, clothed with persistent leaf-remnants, rebranching closely at the tips; branchlets, densely leafy 30 × 10 mm, clavate, rounded at the tips. Leaves erect, extremely rigid, and closely imbricating, ascending; lamina 5-7 × 1 mm, linear-subulate, coriaceous, irregularly thickened and ridged on both sides, distinctly broadening toward apex before abruptly and bluntly narrowing to an obtuse tip clad on both surfaces in a fine silky, silvery appressed tomentum, apex. Sheath 7.0-9.0 × 1.0-1.8 mm, membranous, hyaline, mostly pale brown, apex purple, floccose, with dense weft or tuft of silky hairs at leaf-sheath junction. Capitula 15 mm diameter, sessile to subsessile, terminal and solitary, sunken amongst apical leaves; involucre bracts 23-28, 8-10 mm long, subequal, linear-lanceolate, scarious, pale except at dark tip membranous, apex surmounted by a tuft of silky hairs. Ray-florets 6-8 mm long, white; tube slender, limb lanceolate, 3-toothed, veins evident. Disk-florets 5.8-6.0 mm long, yellow, very narrow-funnelform, teeth minute, triangular. Achenes 2.6-3.0 mm long, narrow-cylindric, subcompressed, ± evenly clad in silky, antrorse hairs (especially along ribs and toward apices). Pappus-hairs 5.2-6.0 mm long, off-white, slender, finely barbellate.

SIMILAR TAXA

Distinguished from *Celmisia argentea* by the semi-woody and densely leafy clavate branches, and by the erect, rigid, closely imbricating leaves with abruptly narrowed, obtuse apices. *Celmisia clavata* is considered by many New Zealand botanists as part of the natural variation within *C. argentea*. Because of this interpretation its exact distribution is unknown. As treated here, *C. clavata* is a Stewart island endemic but similar forms occur in Central Otago where they grow with and appear to intergrade with *C. argentea*. As with most *Celmisia* taxonomic delimitation is unclear and further study, perhaps using appropriate discriminating DNA markers is probably necessary to resolve the status of this species.

DISTRIBUTION

Endemic. Stewart Island:

HABITAT

Subalpine to alpine, in peat bogs, mires and poorly draining herbfield and fellfield.

THREATS

A naturally uncommon species that does not appear to be actively threatened



Mt Rakeahua, Stewart Island/Rakiura.
Photographer: Melissa Hutchison, Date taken:
28/01/2021, Licence: CC BY-NC.



Mt Rakeahua. Photographer: Jane Gosden,
Date taken: 27/02/2023, Licence: CC BY-NC-
SA.

GENUS

Celmisia

FAMILY

Asteraceae

AUTHORITY

Celmisia clavata G.Simpson et G.Thomson

SYNONYMS

None

ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes

ENDEMIC GENUS

No

ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

FLOWERING

October - January

FRUITING

November - April

LIFE CYCLE AND DISPERSAL

Pappate cypselae are dispersed by wind (Thorsen et al., 2009).

PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

Difficult. Best grown from fresh seed but can be grown from cuttings. Should be planted in a free draining, moist soil. Excellent in a pot in an alpine house, or planted in a south-facing rockery. Dislikes humidity and will not tolerate drying out.

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

clavata: From the Latin clavatus 'club-shaped'

MANAAKI WHENUA ONLINE INTERACTIVE KEY

[Key to Celmisia in New Zealand](#)

NVS CODE

CELCLA

CHROMOSOME NUMBER

2n = 108

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2017 | At Risk – Naturally Uncommon | Qualifiers: DP, RR

2012 | At Risk – Naturally Uncommon | Qualifiers: RR

2009 | At Risk – Naturally Uncommon | Qualifiers: IE

2004 | Range Restricted

[Jump to current conservation status](#)

REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

Thorsen MJ, Dickinson KJM, Seddon PJ. 2009. Seed dispersal systems in the New Zealand flora. *Perspectives in Plant Ecology, Evolution and Systematics* 11: 285–309. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ppees.2009.06.001>.

ATTRIBUTION

Description based on herbarium specimens

NZPCN FACT SHEET CITATION

Please cite as: de Lange, P.J. (Year at time of access): *Celmisia clavata* Fact Sheet (content continuously updated). New Zealand Plant Conservation Network. <https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/celmisia-clavata/> (Date website was queried)

MORE INFORMATION

<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/celmisia-clavata/>

PDF DATE

09 July 2026