

Celmisia rigida

BIOSTATUS

Native – Endemic taxon

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2023 | At Risk – Naturally Uncommon | Qualifiers: Sp, DPS

[Jump to previous conservation statuses](#)

CATEGORY

Vascular

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Herbs - Dicotyledonous composites

FLOWER COLOURS

White, Yellow

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Woody-based herb with short branchlets arising from a multicapital stock, usually just below the soil surface; living leaves in few to numerous rosettes at the tips of branchlets; the whole plant forming a loose mat of a few to numerous rosettes. Leaf sheaths densely imbricate and compacted into a pseudostem. Leaf lamina up to 60-220 × 12-70 mm, coriaceous though often flaccidly so, leaves usually at first erect, becoming decumbent with age, elliptic, oblong, or occasionally obovate; upper surface sometimes obscurely sulcate, concolorous, pale to mid-green glabrate above when mature except for a marginal rim of brown hairs; lower surface lustrous, finely and densely covered in cream-coloured tomentum, veins distinct; tip acute; margins entire, flat, with a very narrow rim of hairs slightly darker than those of lower surface; base obliquely cuneate; petiole usually < ¼ length of lamina, deep purple, clad in floccose, whitish hairs. Scape purple, clad in whitish tomentum, up to 400 mm long; bracts numerous, erect, linear sometimes leaf-like; monocephalous. Capitula up to 60 mm diameter. Involucral bracts tomentosa, indument buff-coloured, glabrate, in several series, linear-subulate, erect, glabrate to silky tomentose. Ray florets 70-80, ligulate, the limb linear-lanceolate, white. Disc florets c. 130-170, funneliform, yellow; tube with eglandular, biseriate hairs. Achene fusiform-cylindric, ribbed, 4-5 mm long, glabrous or with scattered bifid hairs. Pappus unequal, c.6 mm long, of c. 20-30 bristles.

SIMILAR TAXA

Celmisia rigida differs from *C. verbascifolia* by the rigidly coriaceous rather than flaccid coriaceous to submembranous leaves; leaf margins which are fringed in dark brownish rather than buff-coloured hairs, by the distinct rather than inconspicuous leaf veins and by the leaf undersides which are finely covered in appressed, cream-coloured lustrous hairs. (Given 1984) treated *Celmisia rigida* as a subspecies of *C. verbascifolia* but that view has not been widely adopted by New Zealand botanists who prefer to maintain *C. rigida* as a distinct species.

DISTRIBUTION

Endemic. Stewart Island: Lords River; Masons Bay area including Ernest Islands; Ruggedy Mountains; Long Island; Whenuakou (Codfish Island).

HABITAT

Mostly coastal. On steep slopes and cliffs on ledges, in crevices and under *Olearia* scrub. Occasionally recorded from coastal river banks



Doughboy Bay, Stewart Island. Photographer: Melissa Hutchison, Date taken: 26/01/2021, Licence: CC BY-NC.

THREATS

A Naturally Uncommon, narrow range endemic that is abundant within its few known locations. Some Stewart Island populations may be affected by white-tailed deer but most seem secure. It is abundant on Whenuahou (Codfish Island).

GENUS

Celmisia

FAMILY

Asteraceae

AUTHORITY

Celmisia rigida (Kirk) Cockayne

SYNONYMS

Celmisia verbascifolia ssp. *rigida* (Kirk) D.R. Given; *Celmisia petiolata* var. *rigida* Kirk

ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes

ENDEMIC GENUS

No

ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

FLOWERING

November - January

FRUITING

December - March

PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

Easily grown from fresh seed but difficult to maintain. Dislikes high humidity. Best in a shaded site planted in a moist free draining soil.

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

rigida: Rigid

MANAAKI WHENUA ONLINE INTERACTIVE KEY

[Key to *Celmisia* in New Zealand](#)

NVS CODE

CELRIG

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

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

2012 | At Risk – Naturally Uncommon | Qualifiers: IE, Sp

2009 | At Risk – Naturally Uncommon

2004 | Range Restricted

[Jump to current conservation status](#)

REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

Given, D.R. 1984: A taxonomic revision of *Celmisia* subgenus *Pelliculatae* section *Petiolatae* (Compositae—Astereae). *New Zealand Journal of Botany* 22: 139-158.

ATTRIBUTION

Description based on Given (1984)

MORE INFORMATION

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

PDF DATE

25 May 2026