

Celmisia semicordata subsp. semicordata

COMMON NAME

large mountain daisy

SYNONYMS

Celmisia coriacea var. *semicordata* (Petrie) Cheeseman

FAMILY

Asteraceae

AUTHORITY

Celmisia semicordata Petrie subsp. *semicordata*

FLORA CATEGORY

Vascular – Native

ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes

ENDEMIC GENUS

No

ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Herbs - Dicotyledonous composites

CHROMOSOME NUMBER

2n = 108

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2012 | Not Threatened

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2009 | Not Threatened

2004 | Not Threatened

DISTRIBUTION

Endemic. South Island: North-West Nelson, Nelson Lakes National, Westland (to sea level at Charleston and Nine-Mile Bluff) to about Fiordland; becoming more common further south along and west of the Main Divide, but with outlier populations in the east near Hamner, Waiau Valley, Lake Sumner, Puketeraki Range, Mount Peel, and the Hunters Hills.

HABITAT

Sea-level to Alpine. Occupying a wide range of sites and habitats though most abundant in subalpine and lower alpine shrub- and grassland. Seaward of the Paparoa Range at Charleston and Nine Mile Bluff it grows on steep bluffs and ledges at sea level, and in south Westland it occurs on outwash gravels at the foot of the mountains below 150 m altitude. It is sporadic in tall-tussock grassland especially on wetter sites. All three subspecies of *Celmisia semicordata*, often rapidly invade sites disturbed by burning, heavy grazing, and erosion.



Arthurs Pass, January. Photographer: John Smith-Dodsworth



Browsed plant. Photographer: Melissa Hutchison

FEATURES

Stout woody-based herb with branchlets arising from a multicapital stock, usually hidden; living leaves in large rosettes at the tips of branchlets, the whole plant forming an irregular sward-like patch; leaf sheaths densely imbricate and compacted, forming a pseudo-stem. Leaf lamina 110-420 × 22-70 mm, more or less coriaceous, at first erect but soon becoming patent, lanceolate to obovate; upper surface regularly sulcate, with flat or slightly recurved margin, more or less concolorous, masked by an obvious silver, slightly bronzed or greenish pellicle; lower surface densely covered in glistening appressed tomentum, midrib prominent; tip acute; margins entire, flat or moderately recurved; base more or less cuneate, occasionally abruptly narrowed to the petiole. Petiole short. Sheath up to 120 × 0 mm, greenish or slightly purplish, clad in floccose white hairs. Scape densely clad in floccose white hairs, stout, up to 450 mm long; bracts several in upper ½, erect, < 100 mm long, margins revolute; usually monocephalous but occasionally with several capitula especially in cultivated specimens. Ray florets 200-250, ligulate, the limb narrow-linear, white. Disc florets 400-450, 8-9 mm long, funneliform, yellow, tube with long eglandular biseriate hairs in lower half. Achene fusiform, strongly grooved, 3.5-8.0 mm long, glabrous or slightly hairy; hairs short, appressed, bifid. Pappus unequal, 5.5-8.0 mm long, of c.40 barbellate bristles.

SIMILAR TAXA

Celmisia semicordata is allied to *Celmisia dubia*, *C. monroi*, and *C. morganii*. From these species it is most likely to be confused with *C. monroi* from which it differs by the open to spreading, rather than erect leaves whose lamina pellicle is silver or golden rather than leaden-coloured. The achenes of *Celmisia semicordata* are mostly glabrous while those of *C. monroi* are consistently hairy. *Celmisia semicordata* subsp. *semicordata* differs from subsp. *aurigena* by the silver or greenish bronze rather than golden pellicle, and from subsp. *stricta* by forming smaller patches with fewer branches, and by the leaves which are much broader, less rigid and which have a less distinct silver or greenish bronze pellicle (the pellicle of subsp. *stricta* is extremely silvery)

FLOWERING

October - February

FLOWER COLOURS

White, Yellow

FRUITING

November - July

PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

Easily grown in a shaded site, planted within a permanently moist, free draining, acidic soil. Dislikes humidity and will not tolerate drying out. Best grown from fresh seed which should be sown immediately or stratified in a fridge or freezer for 1-3 months

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

WHERE TO BUY

Occasionally available from specialist native plant nurseries.

ATTRIBUTION

Description from Given (1980)

REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

Given, D.R. 1980: A taxonomic revision of *Celmisia coriacea* (Forst.f.) Hook.f. and its immediate allies (Asteraeae-Compositae). New Zealand Journal of Botany 18: 127-140.

MORE INFORMATION

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