

Celmisia semicordata subsp. stricta

COMMON NAME

large mountain daisy

SYNONYMS

Celmisia coriacea var. *stricta* Cockayne

FAMILY

Asteraceae

AUTHORITY

Celmisia semicordata subsp. *stricta* (Cockayne) Given

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

2017 | Not Threatened

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2012 | Not Threatened

2009 | Not Threatened

2004 | Not Threatened

DISTRIBUTION

Endemic: South Island: Mountains of western Otago and adjacent Southland (Eyre Mountains, western Garvie Mountains and Hector Range, Mid Dome, Cupola, Takitimu Mountains, Hunter Mountains). Probably also the Hokonui Hills and Blue Mountains.

HABITAT

A prominent member of montane and subalpine grassland communities through its area of distribution especially where burning has disturbed native communities. It occupies a zone between the wetter mountains of Fiordland and Central Otago where *Celmisia semicordata* subsp. *aurigans* apparently replaces it.



Countess Range. Photographer: John Barkla



Countess Range. Photographer: John Barkla

FEATURES

Stout woody-based much-branched herb forming large carpets 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 110-320 × 20-40 mm, more or less coriaceous, at first erect but soon becoming patent, narrowly lanceolate to narrowly oblong-ovate; upper surface regularly sulcate, margin strongly recurved, more or less concolorous, masked by an extremely silvery pellicle (this sometimes becoming lead-coloured when old); lower surface densely covered in glistening appressed tomentum, midrib prominent; tip acute; margins entire, flat or moderately recurved; base cuneate, gradually tapered 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, very stout, up to 450 mm long; with numerous silvery bracts in upper 1/3, these erect, up to 150 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, slightly hairy; hairs short, appressed, bifid. Pappus unequal, 7-8 mm long, of c.40 barbellate bristles.

SIMILAR TAXA

Celmisia semicordata subsp. *stricta* differs from subsp. *semicordata* by forming larger more extensively branched patches, and by the leaves which are narrower, tapering, and more rigid and which have an extremely silvery rather than silver or greenish bronze pellicle. *C. semicordata* subsp. *aurigens* differs from subsp. *stricta* by its wider leaves which have a golden rather than silver pellicle

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 the Danaan 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

stricta: From the Latin *strictus* 'upright, stiff'

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 (Astereae-Compositae). *New Zealand Journal of Botany* 18: 127-140.

MORE INFORMATION

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