

Celmisia sessiliflora

COMMON NAME

white cushion mountain daisy

SYNONYMS

Celmisia sessiliflora var. *exigua* G.Simpson et J.S.Thomson; *Celmisia sessiliflora* var. *pedunculata* Kirk

FAMILY

Asteraceae

AUTHORITY

Celmisia sessiliflora Hook.f.

FLORA CATEGORY

Vascular – Native

ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes

ENDEMIC GENUS

No

ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Herbs - Dicotyledonous composites

NVS CODE

CELSSES

CHROMOSOME NUMBER

2n = 108

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2012 | Not Threatened

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2009 | Not Threatened

2004 | Not Threatened

DISTRIBUTION

Endemic. South Island: Widespread from Nelson south to Southland

HABITAT

Montane to alpine. In grassland, herbfield and fellfield. Sometimes on rock outcrops

FEATURES

Robust densely branched subshrub forming dense patches up to c.1 m diameter and up to 100 mm tall; branchlets close-set, densely clad in imbricate leaves forming compacted rosettes. Leaves erect, becoming reflexed, sheaths persistent. Lamina 10.0-30.0 × 1.5-3.0 mm, linear to linear-subulate, coriaceous, rather rigid; both surfaces densely clad in short appressed white matted hairs; apex obtuse to sub-acute, sometimes subcucullate or apiculate; slightly narrowed at base to pale membranous sheath ± = lamina, ± clad in deciduous matted hairs. Scape reduced to minute stalk densely clad in floccose hairs, sometimes elongating to c.50 mm at fruiting stage and then hairs sparse or absent, ebracteate. Capitula 10-20 mm diameter or more, at first at least closely subtended by leaves; involucre bracts pale, slender, linear-subulate, up to 12 mm long, ± scarious, pilose (with hairs long-persistent at apex). Ray-florets c.15-17 mm long, white; linear, slightly expanded at tips; disk-florets c. 8 mm long, narrow-funnelform, flaring at 5-toothed apex. Achenes 3-4 mm long, cylindric-compressed; hairs on rather obscure ribs short, rather stiff. Pappus usually white; hairs up to 9 mm long, minutely barbellate



Mt Robert, January. Photographer: John Smith-Dodsworth



Mt Technical, Canterbury. Photographer: Jesse Bythell

SIMILAR TAXA

Can only be confused with *Celmisia argentea*. *Celmisia argentea* is confined to Otago and Southland. It is mainly distinguished by its smaller size and much shorter leaves (3.0-5.0 × 0.5-1.5 mm cf. 10.0-30.0 × 1.5-3.0 mm).

FLOWERING

October - February

FLOWER COLOURS

White, Yellow

FRUITING

November - April

LIFE CYCLE

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

sessiliflora: With unstalked flowers

WHERE TO BUY

Not Commercially available.

ATTRIBUTION

Description adapted from Allan (1961)

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 11: 285-309

MORE INFORMATION

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