Celmisia similis

BIOSTATUS
Native – Endemic taxon

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS
2023 | Not Threatened
Jump to previous conservation statuses

CATEGORY
Vascular

STRUCTURAL CLASS
Herbs - Dicotyledonous composites

FLOWER COLOURS
White, Yellow

DETAILED DESCRIPTION
Small slender cushion-forming subshrub with branchlets up to 60 mm long. Living leaves tending to be near the tips of the branchlets and sometimes forming small rosettes. Leaf lamina linear, apiculate, rigid, reflexed at the base, 10-20 × l-2 mm; upper surface covered with a silvery to grey pellicle; lower surface with a loose scurfy grey tomentum; sheath ± 10 mm long. Scape 40.0-60.0 × 1.5mm, reddish, clad in deciduous eglandular hairs. Involucral bracts erect, up to 9 mm long, margins fringed with short hairs, abaxial surface bearing many eglandular hairs. Receptacle obconic and alveolate. Capitulum 10-15 mm diameter. Ray florets ± 10 mm long, tube glabrous. In disc florets, corolla tube gradually narrowed from apex to base, glabrous; stamen tip acute, anther tails short; style bifid, the arms differentiated into a lower parallel-sided papillose portion and an upper attenuate portion bearing long collecting hairs. Pappus bristles unequal, up to 4.5 mm long, with distant or sometimes moderately close fine teeth. Achene 1.5-2.0 × 0.4 mm, fusiform, compressed, weakly ribbed and clad in bifid hairs.



Denniston Plateau. Photographer: Jane Gosden, Date taken: 29/10/2014, Licence: CC BY-NC-SA.



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SIMILAR TAXA
Similar to C. laricifolia from which C. similis differs in the darker distinctly red colour of the scapes, and by the stiffer and wider leaves which are silvery and pellicled on the upper surface (those of C. laricifolia being bronze-green and glabrous). Another distinction is that in fresh specimens the leaves of C. similis tend to be clustered towards the branchlet tips, whereas those of C. laricifolia are usually fairly evenly distributed along the branchlets

DISTRIBUTION
Endemic. South Island: North-West Nelson, north of the Buller Valley and west of the Motueka Valley and tributaries.

HABITAT
Alpine and subalpine. Usually associated with with Chionochloa australis, Celmisia traversii, and C. spectabilis.

GENUS
Celmisia

FAMILY
Asteraceae

AUTHORITY
Celmisia similis Given

SYNONYMS
None (first described in 1969)

ENDEMIC TAXON
Yes

ENDEMIC GENUS
No

ENDEMIC FAMILY
No

FLOWERING
December - February

FRUITING
January - April

LIFE CYCLE AND DISPERSAL
Pappate cypselae are dispersed by wind (Thorsen et al., 2009).

PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE
One of the few Celmisia that is easily grown in most climates though it dislikes high humidity. Best grown in a moist, free draining soil, within some afternoon shade. Plants can be raised from division but are best grown from fresh seed.

WHERE TO BUY
Not Commercially Available

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
similis: Similar to another species

MANAAKI WHENUA ONLINE INTERACTIVE KEY
Key to Celmisia in New Zealand

NVS CODE
CELSIM

CHROMOSOME NUMBER
2n = 108

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES
2017 | Not Threatened
2012 | Not Threatened
2009 | Not Threatened
2004 | Not Threatened
Jump to current conservation status

REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING
Given, D.R. 1969: Taxonomic notes on the genus Celmisia (Compositae). New Zealand Journal of Botany 7: 389-399.
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

ATTRIBUTION
Description based on Given (1980)

MORE INFORMATION

https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/celmisia-similis/

PDF DATE

09 July 2026