Celmisia spectabilis subsp. lanceolata

COMMON NAMES
common mountain daisy, cotton plant

BIOSTATUS
Native – Endemic taxon

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS
2023 | At Risk – Naturally Uncommon | Qualifiers: RR, Sp
Jump to previous conservation statuses

CATEGORY
Vascular

STRUCTURAL CLASS
Herbs - Dicotyledonous composites

FLOWER COLOURS
White, Yellow

DETAILED DESCRIPTION
Woody-based herb forming mats or cushions up to 1.5 m diameter; with branchlets arising from a usually hidden simple or multicipital stock. Living leaves in rosettes at the tips of branchlets, the whole forming a cushion or mat. Leaf sheaths densely imbricate and compacted, forming a pseudostem. Leaf lamina 70-240 × 9-30 mm, (ratio of length to width ± 10); coriaceous, usually lanceolate-oblong to narrowly ovate; upper surface shining and sulcate: lower surface densely covered in soft felted almost tomentum, midrib distinct; tip acute; margins entire and recurved, occasionally minutely toothed, with the lamina base attenuate; sheath greenish. Petiole thin with evident veins. Scape densely clad in floccose white hairs, stout, up to 300 mm long, bracteate, monocephalous. Corolla of disc florets and achenes often with uniseriate and biseriate hairs, mostly hairy, rarely glabrous. Ray florets 40-100, ligulate, white. Disc florets 60-200, 5-9 mm long, funneliform: tube glabrous or with scattered uniseriate or biseriate hairs. Achene fusiform cylindric, grooved, 1.5-6.5 mm long, usually sparsely covered in bifid hairs, rarely glabrous. Pappus hairs 5-9 mm long, barbellate.

SIMILAR TAXA
Distinguished from Celmisia spectabilis subsp. spectabilis by the narrower, longer leaves (70-240 × 9-30 mm cf. 30-180 × 3-30 mm in subsp. spectabilis), almost white rather than pale buff to brown tomentum, and attenuate rather than angled leaf base. The sheath of subsp. lanceolata is greenish rather than green to deep purple, and the achenes usually sparsely covered in hairs rather than mostly glabrous (a feature of subsp. spectabilis). Celmisia spectabilis subsp. lanceolata is allopatric from subsp. spectabilis being known only from the eastern and northern Wairarapa. From subsp. magnifica, subsp. lanceolata differs by the cuneate to cuneate-truncate lamina base, and almost white rather than pale buff coloured tomentum. The leaf sheath is greenish rather than green to purple. Celmisia spectabilis subsp. magnifica occurs to the south of the range of subsp. spectabilis from the Big Ben Range and Acheron Valley just north of Rakaia River, south to the Hunters Hills and Mount Studholme.



In cultivation ex Tainui Taipos, Wairarapa. Photographer: Jeremy R. Rolfe, Date taken: 15/03/2007, Licence: CC BY.



In cultivation ex Tainui Taipos, Wairarapa. Photographer: Jeremy R. Rolfe, Date taken: 15/03/2007, Licence: CC BY.

DISTRIBUTION
Endemic. North Island. Eastern and North Wairarapa from Cape Palliser north to Castlepoint and Mt Kupukore.

HABITAT
Coastal to montane. Locally occurring at rocky sites on ridge crests and steep sided, craggy hills (locally known as taipo), in gorges, and descending to sea level at several localities

THREATS
A Naturally Uncommon, narrow range endemic that is abundant within its few known locations. It does not seem to be especially threatened by browsing animals. In some places it is present in rough pasture and actively spreading.

GENUS
Celmisia

FAMILY
Asteraceae

AUTHORITY
Celmisia spectabilis subsp. lanceolata (Hook.f.) D.R.Given

SYNONYMS
Celmisia spectabilis var. lanceolata Hook. f.

ENDEMIC TAXON
Yes

ENDEMIC GENUS
No

ENDEMIC FAMILY
No

FLOWERING
October - April

FRUITING
November - May

PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE
Of the three subspecies of Celmisia spectabilis, Celmisia spectabilis subsp. lanceolata is the most easily cultivated. It is 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
Occasionaly available from specialist native plant nurseries

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
spectabilis: Notable
lanceolata: Lance-shaped

MANAAKI WHENUA ONLINE INTERACTIVE KEY
Key to Celmisia in New Zealand

NVS CODE
CELSSL

CHROMOSOME NUMBER
2n = 108

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES
2017 | At Risk – Naturally Uncommon | Qualifiers: RR, Sp
2012 | At Risk – Naturally Uncommon | Qualifiers: Sp
2009 | At Risk – Naturally Uncommon | Qualifiers: Sp
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-spectabilis-subsp-lanceolata/

PDF DATE
09 July 2026