Celmisia spectabilis subsp. magnifica

COMMON NAMES
Cotton daisy, mountain daisy, shephards tobacco

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



Habit; Mt Somers. Photographer: Jane Gosden, Date taken: 15/04/2022, Licence: CC BY-NC-SA.



Achenes; Mt Somers. Photographer: Jane Gosden, Date taken: 15/04/2022, Licence: CC BY-NC-SA.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION
Woody-based herb forming mats or cushions 2.0 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 70-290 × 1-45 mm, (ratio of length to width 5.6-10); coriaceous, usually lanceolate-oblong to narrowly ovate; upper surface shining and sulcate: lower surface densely covered in soft felted pale buff tomentum, midrib distinct; tip acute; margins entire and recurved, occasionally minutely toothed, with the lamina base cuneate to cuneate-truncate; sheath green to purple. 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 longer, broader leaves (70-290 × 1-45 mm cf. 30-180 × 3-30 mm in subsp. spectabilis), and cuneate to cuneate-truncate rather than angled leaf base. The achenes of subsp. sepctabilis are glabrous and those of subsp. magnifica mostly sparsely hairy. 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. From Celmisia spectabilis subsp. lanceolata, subsp. magnifica differs by its restriction to the South Island, and by its cuneate to cuneate-truncate rather than attenuate lamina base, and pale buff rather than almost white coloured tomentum. The leaf sheath of subsp. lanceolate is greenish rather than green to purple.

DISTRIBUTION
Endemic. South Island: Big Ben Range and Acheron Valley just north of Rakaia River, south to the Hunters Hills and Mount Studholme.

HABITAT
Alpine and subalpine grassland and herbfield rocky sites

GENUS
Celmisia

FAMILY
Asteraceae

AUTHORITY
Celmisia spectabilis subsp. magnifica (Allan) Given

SYNONYMS
Celmisia spectabilis var. magnifica Allan

ENDEMIC TAXON
Yes

ENDEMIC GENUS
No

ENDEMIC FAMILY
No

FLOWERING
October - February

FRUITING
November - May

PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE
Easily grown from fresh seed. All three subspecies of Celmisia spectabilis are easily grown in most climates though they dislikes high humidity. They are best grown in a moist, free draining soil, within some afternoon shade.

CULTIVATION
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
magnifica: Meaning ‘splendid’

MANAAKI WHENUA ONLINE INTERACTIVE KEY
Key to Celmisia in New Zealand

NVS CODE
CELSSM

CHROMOSOME NUMBER
2n = c.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. 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-magnifica/

PDF DATE
09 July 2026