

Celmisia vespertina

SYNONYMS

None (first described in 1969)

FAMILY

Asteraceae

AUTHORITY

Celmisia vespertina Given

FLORA CATEGORY

Vascular – Native

ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes

ENDEMIC GENUS

No

ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Herbs - Dicotyledonous composites

NVS CODE

CELVES

CHROMOSOME NUMBER

2n = 108

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2017 | Not Threatened | Qualifiers: DP

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2012 | Not Threatened

2009 | Not Threatened

2004 | Not Threatened

DISTRIBUTION

Endemic. South Island: Mostly west of the Main Divide of the Southern Alps, from near the Taramakau Valley southwards to near Mount Aspiring. Otherwise known in the east only from the Ben Ohau Range

HABITAT

Alpine grassland and associated fell field



Birch Hill Stream, Mt Cook, January.
Photographer: John Smith-Dodsworth, Licence: CC BY-NC.



Seeding, Mungo River upper valley, West Coast. Photographer: Dave Toole, Date taken: 04/01/2021, Licence: CC BY-NC.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Woody-based perennial herb arising from a multicapital stock. Leaf lamina linear, rigid but recurved, 50-150 × 3-5 mm; upper surface grooved, dark green, clad in a thick pellicle which becomes golden on drying; lower surface clad in thick appressed white tomentum, midrib prominent; margins entire, often revolute. Sheath 30-60 mm long, membranous, yellow-orange and clad in a thin pellicle. Scape 100-150 mm × 2-3 mm, bracts few. Involucral bracts erect, linear-oblong to subulate, acute, up to 12 mm long, inner narrower than outer; margins fringed with long white hairs, particularly near the base; surface almost glabrous; venation simple. Receptacle obconic, upper surface alveolate. Ray florets up to 20 mm long, limb linear and glabrous, tube narrow with a few eglandular hairs near top. In disc florets, corolla tube gradually narrowed from apex to base, glabrous or sparsely hairy with long biseriate hairs; stamen tip acute, anther tails short; style bifid, the arms differentiated into a lower parallel-sided papillose portion and an upper short-triangular portion bearing short collecting hairs. Pappus bristles unequal, up to 4 mm long, with closely spaced short teeth. Achene 2.0-3.0 × 0.5 mm, fusiform, compressed, strongly ribbed and clad in bifid hairs.

SIMILAR TAXA

Could be confused with *Celmisia insignis* a Marlborough endemic from which it differs its smaller achenes that are covered in bifid hairs rather than glabrous, by its shorter pappus, by the disc florets which have fewer corolla hairs and by its shorter, darker green and more distinctly grooved leaves. In addition, *Celmisia insignis* lacks the distinctive pellicle characterising dried specimens of *C. vespertina*. The species is similar to *C. petriei* and *C. polyvena* from both of which it differs by its intermediate size and leaf and by its distinctive pellicle and sheath colour.

FLOWERING

December - February

FLOWER COLOURS

White, Yellow

FRUITING

January - March

LIFE CYCLE

Pappate cypselae are dispersed by wind (Thorsen et al., 2009).

PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

Unknown.

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

WHERE TO BUY

Not Commercially Available

ATTRIBUTION

Description based on Given (1969)

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

MORE INFORMATION

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