Clematis marmoraria

COMMON NAMES
North-west Nelson marble clematis

BIOSTATUS
Native – Endemic taxon

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS
2023 | Threatened – Nationally Endangered | Qualifiers: DPT, OL
Jump to previous conservation statuses

CATEGORY
Vascular

STRUCTURAL CLASS
Lianes & Related Trailing Plants - Dicotyledons

FLOWER COLOURS
White

DETAILED DESCRIPTION
A low rupestral dioecious subshrub with slender taproot and several stems, spreading in suitable habitats by a succession of suckers. Stems perennial, c.1-2 mm diameter, up to 500 mm long, almost or quite glabrous and inconspicuously grooved. Underground part of suckers 40-500 mm long with 2-14 pairs of much reduced leaves (internodes 1-60 mm long); usually rooting and branching at some nodes. Aerial stems erect to decumbent, very short (40-100 mm) but longer in shade, internodes 1-40 mm long; usually sparingly branched. Underground leaves 1-5 mm long, entire to minutely lobed. Green leaves ± crowded, subcoriaceous to coriaceous, almost glabrous, up 40 mm long, living c.2 years before slowly decaying to base. Petioles 5-18 mm long, channelled, not twining. Laminae broad-ovate to angular-ovate in outline when fresh, variously dissected (with major segments ± ascending and overlapping) from multifid-multipartite to deeply 3-lobed to 3-foliolate; lobes or leaflets deeply incised 2-3 times (to bipinnate below in leaflets), upper surface of segments concave and ± bordered, ultimately small, obtuse to subacute; lateral leaflets short petioluled, oblique at base. Subfloral leaves 3-21 mm long. Inflorescence a solitary flower, axillary, ± fulvous pubescent; peduncles 25-75 mm long; bracts 1-2 pairs –lower pair (often lacking) basal, connate, blade c.2 mm long, minutely 3-lobed - upper pair 2.0-7.7 mm long, narrow-oblong to spathulate, entire or shallowly lobed. Male flower 20-30 mm diameter; sepals 5-8, white (slightly green-stained when young), thinly fulvous-silky without, glabrous within, 6-18 × 3.0-10.5 mm, obovate (occasionally elliptic); stamens 20-50, 5-9 mm long, anthers 1.0-1.8 mm long, ovate-oblong, connective produced into minute blunt apiculus; carpels 0. Female flower with slightly smaller sepals; stamens 8-13, anthers barren; carpels 20-50. Achene seed body ovoid, 3-4 mm long, puberulent, brown; style 15-30 mm long, pale fulvous-plumose

SIMILAR TAXA
Distinguished from all other New Zealand Clematis (indigenous or naturalised) by the restriction to marble subalpine to alpine habitats, by tufted suckering shrublet growth habit; non twining petioles; and by the flowers which have pure white or faintly greenish-yellow, obovate-elliptic sepals.

In cultivation ex Hoary Head, NW Nelson. Photographer: Jeremy R. Rolfe, Date taken: 15/03/2007, Licence: CC BY.

In cultivation ex Hoary Head, NW Nelson. Photographer: Jeremy R. Rolfe, Date taken: 04/10/2007, Licence: CC BY.

DISTRIBUTION
Endemic. New Zealand: South Island (Confined to two sites within north west Nelson, Kahurangi National Park).

HABITAT
Alpine marble karrenfield where it grows in either in crevices in massive marble, or amongst semi-fixed rocks, stones and similar rocky sites in open herbfield

THREATS
Apparently confined to only two sites at which it remains vulnerable to animal (goat, deer) browse.

GENUS
Clematis

FAMILY
Ranunculaceae

AUTHORITY
Clematis marmoraria Sneddon

SYNONYMS
None (described in 1975)

TAXONOMIC NOTES
Occasionally available from some specialist native plant nurseries. This species has been hybridised with several of the other New Zealand species ot produce a range of cultivars now popular with gardeners are widely available from garden centres.

ENDEMIC TAXON
Yes

ENDEMIC GENUS
No

ENDEMIC FAMILY
No

FLOWERING
December

FRUITING
January - March

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

PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE
Can be grown from cuttings and fresh seed. Slow growing and best kept in a deep, well drained pot within an alpine house, except in cooler climates. Does best in lime rich soils.

PLANT OF THE MONTH
This plant has been featured as a Plant of the Month – see Trilepidea: NZPCN newsletter for August 2008 for the full story.

ETYMOLOGY
clematis: From the Greek klema ‘vine’, alluding to the vine-like habit of many species

NVS CODE
CLEMMR

CHROMOSOME NUMBER
2n = 16

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2017 | Threatened – Nationally Vulnerable | Qualifiers: CD, OL
2012 | Threatened – Nationally Vulnerable | Qualifiers: CD, RR
2009 | Threatened – Nationally Vulnerable | Qualifiers: CD, RR
2004 | Gradual Decline
Jump to current conservation status

REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

Sneddon, B.V. 1975: A new Clematis from North-west Nelson, New Zealand. New Zealand Journal of Botany 13: 557-65.
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 from Sneddon (1975)

MORE INFORMATION

https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/clematis-marmoraria/

PDF DATE

25 May 2026