

Craspedia blepharia

COMMON NAMES

Garibaldi woollyhead

BIOSTATUS

Native – Endemic taxon

CATEGORY

Vascular

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Herbs - Dicotyledonous composites

SIMPLIFIED DESCRIPTION

An alpine and sub-alpine species of calcareous rocks. Recognised by leaf surface of its rosette leaves that are clad with dense hispid hairs above and sparse indumentum below of long (2.2–3 mm), usually curved, slightly brown or colourless translucent hairs that may have a very thin curly, flagellate tip, and leaf margins with a thin white rim formed by the flagellate tips of these long, curved trichomes.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Evergreen, perennial, rhizomatous herb with 1 flowering scape per rosette; either single rosettes or clumps of rosettes. Rhizome with a loose, fibrous root system of glabrescent thick and very fine roots; rhizome 21–57 mm long; thick roots c. 10, straight, with lateral roots, dark brown; longest roots 22–120 mm long and c. 1 mm in diameter; fine roots much fewer and shorter than thick roots, entangled. Rosette leaves 4–9, (21–)27–77 mm long and 8–26 mm wide, petiolate, moderate olive green; petiole 11–35 mm long and 3–8 mm wide at narrowest point; lamina smooth, fleshy, c. 1.2 mm thick, 16–41(–48) mm long and 8–26 mm wide, spatulate [length-to-width ratio c. (1.8–)2–3(–5.3):1; widest point at c. (1/2–)3/4 of length]; base attenuate, gradually narrowing to a ± indistinct petiole; apex obtuse, flat, apiculate, tinged dark red; lamina veins inconspicuous, except for prominent midrib; both lamina surfaces covered with a hispid indumentum of long trichomes, very dense adaxially, sparse abaxially; trichomes uniseriate, multiseptate, translucent, usually slightly brown or colourless, usually curved, 2.2–3 mm long, occasionally with a very thin curly, flagellate tip; in between long trichomes, numerous short, stipitate, glandular trichomes, 0.1–0.2 mm long; leaf margin thickly covered with long trichomes with curly, flagellate tips; leaf remnants usually retained as a fibrous tunic surrounding the current season's rosettes for several seasons. Scape bracts 3–7, sessile, like rosette leaves, but smaller and narrower, becoming progressively smaller distally; basal bracts sometimes semi-amplexicaul; bracts at half-length of scape oblanceolate, 12–23 mm long and 4–11 mm wide. Scapes at anthesis (71–)130–230(–310) mm high and at the base 0.9–2.5 mm in diameter, green to dark red, smooth, sparsely covered with curly, flagellate aseptate trichomes and short, stipitate, glandular trichomes. Inflorescence a solitary, terminal glomerule; in early flowering hemispherical, 14–21 mm wide and (9–)12–21 mm high in full flower, changing gradually to globose after anthesis, with c. 40 homogamous, discoid capitula and a total of c. 240 florets; glomerule bracts c. 5–10 mm long, ovate to elliptic, herbaceous, bright green, with a scarious, entire, translucent margin, medium brown, 1.0–1.8 mm wide at apex, as long as outer florets, covered sparsely with curly, flagellate aseptate trichomes and densely with short, stipitate, glandular trichomes. Capitula subsessile, each with 5–6(–7) florets, c. 4.7 mm long; main phyllary of involucre c. 6 mm long, obovate, herbaceous, bright green, with scarious, entire, translucent margin, medium brown in upper half, 2.4 mm wide at apex, covered sparsely with curly, flagellate aseptate trichomes. Corolla white, 5-lobed, c. 3.7 mm long; tube c. 2.5 mm long, throat c. 0.7 mm long and 1.5 mm in diameter, and lobes c. 0.5 mm long; lobes slightly reflexed at anthesis, glandular. Style arms white, truncate, with brush of papillae at apex. Anther tube greenish yellow. Pollen greenish yellow. Pappus with 12–16 plumose bristles 3.2–3.6 mm long, white, arranged in 1 row; apical pappus bristle plumes clavate. Achenes obovate, light nut-brown, 1.5–2 mm long and 0.8–1 mm wide, densely covered with antrorse twin trichomes, 0.2–0.75 mm long, and medium densely with short, glandular trichomes 0.09–0.15 mm long; pappus-to-achene length ratio 1.9:1–2.2:1.



SIMILAR TAXA

Craspedia blepharia differs from the other currently recognised species of *Craspedia* by the indumentum characters of its rosette leaves. It has a hispid indumentum of uniseriate, multiseptate trichomes that is very dense on the adaxial and sparse on the abaxial leaf surface. The usually slightly brown or colourless translucent trichomes are usually curved like an eyelash and very long (2.2–3 mm long). They may have a very thin curly, flagellate tip (not included in the length measurement). At the leaf margin, the flagellate tips of the long, curved trichomes are more common, obvious and tangled, thus forming a thin white rim that gives the impression of it floating above the leaf margin. The leaves of *C. blepharia* are also distinctly fleshy, c. 1.2 mm thick, with the leaf apex obtuse, flat, apiculate with a dark red tinge.

DISTRIBUTION

New Zealand: South Island, North-West Nelson, Garibaldi Ridge (Kahurangi National Park)

HABITAT

Craspedia blepharia is an alpine and sub-alpine species, growing between c. 1200–1400 m elevation, where it is restricted to vertical limestone surfaces, escarpments that surround the plateau, and the sides of dolines. Also found on quartzose sandstone cliffs that underlie limestones, where plants receive calcium-rich seep-water from the dissolution of limestone above.

THREATS

Craspedia blepharia [as *Craspedia* (cc) (CHR 358403; Garibaldi Ridge)] has been assessed as ‘At Risk / Naturally Uncommon – Taxonomically unresolved’, with a qualifier of ‘RR’ (Range Restricted) by the New Zealand Indigenous Vascular Plant Threat Listing Panel (de Lange et al. [2024](#)) using the New Zealand Threat Classification System (NZTCS) (Townsend et al. [2008](#)). *Craspedia blepharia* is known only from Garibaldi Ridge, hence its ‘Range Restricted’ qualifier. There, for now, *Craspedia blepharia* appears to occur as a stable population, and there are no apparent threats to its persistence. The situation may change as the impacts of global warming take greater effect (Breitwieser & Courtney 2024).

GENUS

Craspedia

FAMILY

Asteraceae

AUTHORITY

Craspedia blepharia Breitw. & Courtney

SYNONYMS

None - first described in 2024

ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes

ENDEMIC GENUS

No

ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

FLOWERING

January to mid-February

FRUITING

March

ETYMOLOGY

craspedia: Craspedia is named for the Greek ‘Kraspedon’, meaning an edge, hem or border, because of the woolly fringes of the leaves of the type species.

blepharia: Derived from Greek word for eyelashes

REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

Breitwieser, I.; Courtney, S.P. 2024: *Craspedia blepharia* (Compositae/Asteraceae, Gnaphalieae), anew species from Garibaldi Ridge in Nelson/Tasman, South Island of New Zealand. *New Zealand Journal of Botany*: 1–14 (online). (Published online: 24 October 2024 <https://doi.org/10.1080/0028825X.2024.2418004>)

de Lange, P.J.; Gosden, J.; Courtney, S.P.; Fergus, A.J.; Barkla, J.W.; Beadel, S.M.; Champion, P.D.; Hindmarsh-Walls, R.; Makan, T.; Michel, P. 2024: *Conservation status of vascular plants in Aotearoa New Zealand, 2023*. *New Zealand threat classification series 43*. Wellington: Department of Conservation.
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Townsend AJ, de Lange PJ, Norton DA, Molloy J, Miskelly C, Duffy C. 2008. *New Zealand threat classification manual*. Wellington: Department of Conservation.
<https://www.doc.govt.nz/Documents/science-and-technical/sap244.pdf>.

ATTRIBUTION

Fact Sheet prepared for NZPCN by P.J. de Lange 27 March 2025. Description from Breitwieser & Courtney (2024) rest of text adapted from that paper.

MORE INFORMATION

<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/craspedia-blepharia/>

PDF DATE

25 May 2026