

Dracophyllum muscoides

COMMON NAME

cushion inaka

FAMILY

Ericaceae

AUTHORITY

Dracophyllum muscoides Hook.f.

FLORA CATEGORY

Vascular – Native

ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes

ENDEMIC GENUS

No

ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Trees & Shrubs - Dicotyledons

NVS CODE

DRAMUS

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2017 | Not Threatened

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2012 | Not Threatened

2009 | Not Threatened

2004 | Not Threatened

BRIEF DESCRIPTION

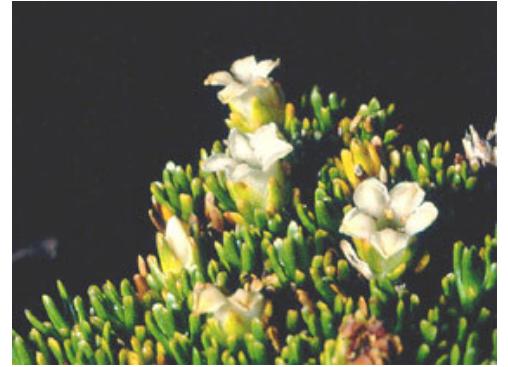
Tightly packed low growing cushion of many small leaves with only the tips usually visible inhabiting mountain areas of the southern South Island. Leaves very small, 1-3mm long by

DISTRIBUTION

Endemic. New Zealand: South Island (from Mount Hercules southwards to the Princess Mountains)

HABITAT

Dracophyllum muscoides is a plant of subalpine cushion herbfield, grassland to alpine bog, fellfield and boulder field growing at elevations of 914–2,600 m.



Old Man range, January. Photographer: John Smith-Dodsworth, Licence: CC BY-NC.



Old Man range, January. Photographer: John Smith-Dodsworth, Licence: CC BY-NC.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Compact cushions, 15–50 mm tall. Branches erect stemmed and much-branched, closely packed together. Bark on old branches greyish brown, deeply fissured, young stems reddish brown. Leaves spiraling along branches, imbricate, appressed to stem, dry old leaves present; lamina sheath light green, 1.5–3.0 × 1.5–3.0 mm, tapering and margin membranous, ciliate. lamina coriaceous to rigid and hard, 1.0–3.0 × 0.3–0.8 mm, linear to linear-triangular, mid to olive green, margins serrulate with 5–10 teeth per 10 mm (only the front third of leaf with teeth); apex thickened, obtuse and keeled. Inflorescence a terminal, erect, sessile, solitary flower; shorter than the leaves. inflorescence bract shorter than flower, 3.3–3.5 × 1.5–2.0 mm, ovate-lanceolate; margins serrulate; apex obtuse. Sepals 1.5–4.5 × 1.5–2.0 mm, ovate-lanceolate, equaling corolla tube; margins ciliate; apices subacute to obtuse. Corolla white; corolla tube 2.0–2.5 × 1.5–3.5 mm, narrowly-campanulate, corolla lobes spreading horizontally, 1.0–1.5 × 1.0–1.5 mm, ovate-triangular, shorter than corolla tube, apices obtuse; apical ridge present; inflexed for the entire length; surfaces glabrous. Stamens inserted on corolla tube in the upper third, filaments 0.2–0.5 mm long; anthers included, 0.8–1.0 mm long, oblong, initially pink turning light yellow and. Ovary ovate, 1.4–1.5 × 1.3–1.4 mm, apex round; nectary scales 0.5–0.9 × 0.5–0.7 mm, rectangular, apices retuse to irregularly toothed; style included, 0.8–1.0 mm long, glabrous, not lengthening in fruit; stigma five-lobed. Fruit 1.0–1.1 × 0.8–1.0 mm, depressed-globose, light brown apex truncate, glabrous. Seeds 0.5–0.6 mm long, ovoid, yellowish brown, testa slightly reticulate.

SIMILAR TAXA

Dracophyllum muscoides is recognised by the cushion growth habit; closely imbricating leaves (these 1.0–3.0 × 0.3–0.8 mm), which widen suddenly into a broad sheath 1.5–3.0 mm long and wide; by the solitary flowers situated at the apices of the stems, and whose sepals are 2.5–4.5 mm long and whose corolla tube is 2.0–2.5 mm long. *Dracophyllum muscoides* is most similar to *Dracophyllum prostratum* from which it differs by the many erect-stemmed branches, deeply fissured bark and fewer (5–10 compared to 10–40) teeth per 10 mm on lamina margin. The flowers are also shorter than the leaves, with the sepals equaling the corolla tube and the corolla tube shorter (2.0–2.5 mm compared to 3.0–4.5 mm in *D. prostratum*) and narrowly campanulate. The corolla lobes of *D. muscoides* are mostly horizontal and the ovary ovate and wider (1.3–1.4 mm compared to 1.0–1.5 mm in *D. prostratum*).

FLOWERING

December – May

FLOWER COLOURS

White

FRUITING

February - August

LIFE CYCLE

Minute seeds are wind dispersed (Thorsen et al., 2009).

PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

Difficult - should not be removed from the wild

ETYMOLOGY

dracophyllum: Dragon leaf, from its likeness to the dragon tree of the Canary Islands

WHERE TO BUY

Not commercially available.

ATTRIBUTION

Fact sheet prepared for NZPCN by P.J. de Lange (6 June 2012). Description adapted from Venter (2009).

REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

Venter, S. 2009: A taxonomic revision of the genus *Dracophyllum* Labill. (Ericaceae). Unpublished Phd Thesis, Victoria University of Wellington, Wellington.
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

NZPCN FACT SHEET CITATION

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<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/dracophyllum-muscoides/> (Date website was queried)

MORE INFORMATION

<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/dracophyllum-muscoides/>