

Euchiton ensifer

COMMON NAMES

creeping cudweed

BIOSTATUS

Native – Endemic taxon

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2023 | At Risk – Declining | Qualifiers: Sp, DPS, DPT, PD, RR

[Jump to previous conservation statuses](#)

CATEGORY

Vascular

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Herbs - Dicotyledonous composites

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Stoloniferous, creeping perennial. Stems 1-4(-6), decumbent to ascending, spreading, simple, 20-100 mm tall. Leaves mainly basal; these short-petiolate, 13-50 x 1-5 mm, narrow-elliptic to linear, cuneate, acute, mucronate, densely covered in closely appressed white indumentum on lower surface except mid-vein, almost glabrous to sparsely tomentose above; cauline leaves only slightly reducing up stem, linear, apetalate. Capitula 1-2 mm diameter, 1-9 in loose terminal clusters; longest subtending leaves < to marginally > diameter of cluster. Involucral bracts 4.2-5 mm, elliptic-oblong, obtuse to subacute; stereome green; lamina pale brown with darker markings toward base; gap and margins tinged pale to bright rose or red-purple. Achenes 0.8-1 mm long, covered with short antrorse hairs.

SIMILAR TAXA

Most similar to *E. delicatus* (D.G.Drury) Holub from which it differs by the narrow-elliptic to linear rather than elliptic-oblong leaves, longer involucral bracts (4.2-5 cf 3.5-4 mm in *E. delicatus*), rather openly diffuse rather than compact fruiting head, and larger achenes (0.8-1 mm cf. 0.7-0.8 mm long in *E. delicatus*) bearing longer hairs.

DISTRIBUTION

Endemic. North and South Islands. In the North Island known from the Kaingaroa Plain (Matea Road) and Kaimanawa Ranges. In the South rather locally distributed from Nelson south to Southland but not, apparently in Westland.

HABITAT

Montane to alpine in damp sites, particularly tarn and other ephemeral pond margins, or in seepages and flushes within tussock grassland. Sometimes on stream banks.

THREATS

A naturally uncommon, biologically sparse species which, based on current information does not appear to under any serious threat. However, weeds encroaching on montane wetlands are threatening a few populations.

GENUS

Euchiton

FAMILY

Asteraceae

AUTHORITY

Euchiton ensifer (D.G.Drury) Holub



Euchiton ensifer. Photographer: John Smith-Dodsworth, Licence: CC BY-NC.

SYNONYMS

Gnaphalium ensifer D.G.Drury, Euchiton ensifer (D.G.Drury) Anderb. (nom. illegit.)

ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes

ENDEMIC GENUS

No

ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

FLOWERING

October - January

FRUITING

November - April

LIFE CYCLE AND DISPERSAL

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

PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

Easily grown from fresh seed and rooted pieces. Best kept in a partially submerged pot, placed in full sun.

WETLAND PLANT INDICATOR STATUS RATING

FACW: Facultative Wetland

Usually is a hydrophyte but occasionally found in uplands (non-wetlands).

PLANT OF THE MONTH

This plant has been featured as a Plant of the Month – see [Trilepidea: NZPCN newsletter for February 2022](#) for the full story.

ETYMOLOGY

euchiton: From the Greek eu (good) and chiton (tunic or covering)

NVS CODE

EUCENS

CHROMOSOME NUMBER

2n = 28

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2017 | Threatened – Nationally Endangered | Qualifiers: DP, PD, RR, Sp

2012 | Threatened – Nationally Endangered | Qualifiers: PD, RR, Sp

2009 | Data Deficient

2004 | Sparse

[Jump to current conservation status](#)

REGIONAL CONSERVATION STATUSES

Otago: 2025 | Regionally Threatened – Regionally Endangered | Qualifiers: DPR, DPS, DPT, NStr, PD, PF, RR, Sp Help
The regional threat classification system leverages off the national assessments in the NZTCS, providing information relevant for the regional context. Otago conservation status information is sourced from the [“Conservation Status of Indigenous Vascular Plants in Otago, 2025”](#) Jarvie S et al. (2025) report.

REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

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

Fact sheet prepared by P.J. de Lange for NZPCN (1 June 2013)

NZPCN FACT SHEET CITATION

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MORE INFORMATION

<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/euchiton-ensifer/>

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