

Euphrasia australis

BIOSTATUS

Native – Endemic taxon

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2023 | Not Threatened

[Jump to previous conservation statuses](#)

CATEGORY

Vascular

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Herbs - Dicotyledons other than Composites

FLOWER COLOURS

White, Yellow

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Slender sparingly-branched annual herb 50-200 mm tall, branches bifariously white-pubescent and more or less glandular-pilose, internodes very elongated. Leaves sessile, up to 10-12 x 7-8 mm, more or less obovate-cuneate with 2-3 pairs of acute teeth, sometimes almost suborbicular with teeth obtuse, glabrous or with sparse long glandular hairs, sometimes sparsely white-pubescent, margins thickened and revolute. Flowers, few towards the tips of the branches, pedicels short or up to 10 mm in flower, usually elongated and up to 25 mm in fruit. Calyx 4-6 mm long, sometimes enlarged in fruit up to 12 x 8 mm, pilose with long glandular hairs and sometimes also white-pubescent; lobes acute to obtuse, margins and midribs thickened. Corolla white, approximately 10-12 mm long; tube slightly to much longer than calyx; lobes of lower lip 1.5-3 mm wide, entire. Anthers yellow to golden brown, margins sparsely hairy to glabrous, awns slender, almost equal. Capsule approximately equal to calyx or much shorter, approximately 5-6 x 5 mm, obovate, finely setose at apex; seeds approximately 4-6 per locule.

SIMILAR TAXA

Similar in appearance to *Euphrasia zelandica* and was previously thought to be merely a varietal of that species. *E. zelandica* is generally smaller in stature than *E. australis*, up to 100 mm high compared to 200 mm, having a slenderer appearance. The flower pedicels are longer on *E. australis*, up to 10mm compared to up to 4 mm in *E. zelandica*. *E. zelandica* has shorter white hairs compared longer more sparse glandular hairs on *E. australis*. *E. zelandica* has a larger distribution range (see that species fact sheet), *E. australis* is restricted to West Otago and Fiordland.

DISTRIBUTION

Endemic. South Island. West Otago and Fiordland, subalpine to almost sea level in fiords.

HABITAT

Subalpine to almost sea level in fiords. Boggy ground in sub-alpine meadow, shrubby-tussockland, tussock grassland.

GENUS

Euphrasia

FAMILY

Orobanchaceae

AUTHORITY

Euphrasia australis Petrie



Mt Burns, February. Photographer: John Smith-Dodsworth, Licence: CC BY-NC.

TAXONOMIC NOTES

An early entity known as *E. crosby-smithii* Petrie was described from a single collecting “Wet alpine meadow on Mount Cleughearn, Fiord County, about 5,000 ft.; J. Crosby Smith”. The type sheet (W 4852) contains 3 tiny plants 20 mm high with flowers and capsules on pedicels up to 5 mm long. Apart from unusually small size these cannot be separated from the other *E. australis/zelandica* forms of Fiordland

ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes

ENDEMIC GENUS

No

ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

FLOWERING

November - April

FRUITING

December - April

LIFE CYCLE AND DISPERSAL

Seeds is dispersed by wind and possibly water and ballistic projection (Thorsen et al., 2009).

ETYMOLOGY

euphrasia: Eye-medicine

australis: Southern

NVS CODE

EUPAUS

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2017 | Not Threatened

2012 | Not Threatened

2009 | Not Threatened

2004 | Not Threatened

[Jump to current conservation status](#)

REGIONAL CONSERVATION STATUSES

Otago: 2025 | Regionally Not Threatened [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

Allan, H. H. 1961. Flora of New Zealand. Volume 1. Wellington: Government Printer. pg.857.

Petrie, D. 1916. Descriptions of New Native Phanerogams. Transactions and Proceedings of the New Zealand Institute 48: pg. 186-192.

ATTRIBUTION

Fact sheet prepared for NZPCN by M. Ward (30 October 2020) Description adapted from Allan (1961).

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MORE INFORMATION

<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/euphrasia-australis/>

PDF DATE

