

Euphrasia laingii

COMMON NAME

eyebright

FAMILY

Orobanchaceae

AUTHORITY

Euphrasia laingii Petrie

FLORA CATEGORY

Vascular – Native

ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes

ENDEMIC GENUS

No

ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Herbs - Dicotyledons other than Composites

NVS CODE

EUPLAI

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2017 | Not Threatened

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2012 | Not Threatened

2009 | Not Threatened

2004 | Not Threatened

DISTRIBUTION

Endemic. South Island, mountains of Marlborough and Canterbury.

HABITAT

Montane to subalpine open places on drier mountains.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Perennial herb much branched from woody stock; stems woody at base, often prostrate and rooting in lower parts, branches erect, 80-150 (-200) mm tall, bifariously pubescent. Leaves sessile, usually rather distant, more or less ascending, 6-12 (-15) x 3-6 (-8) mm, narrow-cuneate to cuneate-obovate or -oblong, 3-lobed at tip with narrow lateral lobes and broad, obtuse to subacute central lobe, sometimes incisions very shallow, glabrous, usually reddish when fresh, margins thickened and recurved. Flowers, up to 6 pairs in short or elongated raceme; pedicels up to 10 mm long, sometimes longer than leaves. Calyx 6-12 mm long, glabrous or sparsely pubescent at very base, generally unevenly divided $\frac{1}{4}$ - $\frac{1}{3}$ way; lobes acute to obtuse, margins and midribs thickened and sometimes reddish. Corolla white, 15-20 mm long, 10-15 mm diameter; tube longer than calyx; lobes of lower lip approximately 4-6 mm wide, emarginate. Anthers red-brown, marginal hairs numerous, awns usually unequal. Capsule shorter than calyx, approximately 6-9 x 3-4 mm, oblong to narrow-oblong or -obovate, glabrous or sparsely setose: seeds numerous, 1.5-2 mm long.



Hooker valley, February. Photographer: John Smith-Dodsworth, Licence: CC BY-NC.



Lake Lyndon area. Photographer: Jane Gosden, Date taken: 19/01/2024, Licence: CC BY-NC-SA.

SIMILAR TAXA

Similar to and closely related to *Euphrasia monroi* with which it sympatric, and from which it differs by its leaves being less cartilaginous compared to extremely cartilaginous when dry, leaves are narrow-cuneate to cuneate-oblong or -obovate rather than cuneate to broad-obovate in outline giving the plant a more slender appearance. The pedicels of *E. laingii* are longer (up to 10 mm long) and more obvious compared to the usually congested and hidden (up to 4 mm long), pedicels of *E. monroi*.

FLOWERING

December – February (-March).

FLOWER COLOURS

White

FRUITING

January – March (April).

LIFE CYCLE

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

ETYMOLOGY

euphrasia: Eye-medicine

laingii: Named after Robert Malcolm Laing (1865-1941), a botanist and phycologist from Canterbury, who focused on Banks Peninsula, the Canterbury foothills, Campbell Island, the Spencer Mountains and Norfolk Island.

TAXONOMIC NOTES

Rather variable in the northern part of its range and sometimes not clearly distinct from *E. monroi*. Specimens from Amuri with 5-toothed leaves have been labelled by Petrie “*E. laingii* var.” Specimens from Mt. Owen, Nelson, with broadly 3-5-lobed leaves may be correctly placed here also, but the stouter perennial species of western Nelson are very poorly known. Some forms found in Marlborough have small, almost entire leaves, and slender plants collected in the Tararua Range, North Island by Druce are very similar.

ATTRIBUTION

Fact sheet prepared for NZPCN by M.D. Ward (5 November 2020) Description adapted from Allan (1961).

REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

Allan, H. H. 1961. Flora of New Zealand. Volume 1. Wellington: Government Printer. Page 853.

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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MORE INFORMATION

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