

Euphrasia wettsteiniana

COMMON NAMES

eyebright

BIOSTATUS

Native – Endemic taxon

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

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

[Jump to previous conservation statuses](#)

CATEGORY

Vascular

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Herbs - Dicotyledons other than Composites

FLOWER COLOURS

White, Yellow

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Perennial, prostrate fine-leaved evergreen succulent not rooting at nodes; **stem** glabrous-subglabrous, approximately 0.4 mm diameter. **Leaves** sessile, fleshy, 3.5 x 1 mm, oval-lanceolate, narrowed at the base, apex apiculate, margin entire or with a pair of lanceolate, apiculate teeth up to approximately 0.5-1 mm long about the middle (both forms may occur on same plant), subglabrous, or pilose. **Flowers** borne singly along the branches on 1-2 mm generally horizontal pedicels which are bent abruptly at junction with calyx so that flower stands erect. Calyx, about 3-4 mm, nearly equal to half quadrifidus, ovate lobes sharpest placed on end, 0.2 mm long, very sparsely ciliate with white hairs, persistent until onset of decay. Corolla white to cream, striped, with yellow blotching mid-way toward limb, 15-70 mm long, tube up to 60mm long, very narrow to filiform, flaring suddenly into limb 8-9 mm diameter, more or less pilose; lobes of lower lip 4.2-5.2 mm wide, entire, of upper lip very short but wider, up to 6 mm wide. Anthers free, erect, golden yellow ellipsoidal blunt, filament glabrous; stamens subequal to didynamous 1 x 2 mm long uniformly mucronate. Style, slender, unbranched, bent at tip, stigma insignificant. Ovary with 1 ovule per locule; **capsule** broader than tall, rupturing calyx at anterior cleft; sometimes 2-seeded and symmetrically obcordate or bicornute, more often 1-seeded by abortion and asymmetric, approximately 2 x 4 mm and ovate to triangular in outline; apparently indehiscent. **Seed** close to ovate, approximately 1.3-1.4 x 2.3-2.8 (-3.5) mm long.

SIMILAR TAXA

From *Euphrasia disperma* it can be distinguished by its much larger and usually much more long-tubed flowers, and by its more distinctly nerved and usually distinctly unidentate leaves. In *E. disperma* the corolla (9-15 mm long), and anthers (1 mm long) are much shorter than in *E. wettsteiniana* (15-70 mm, and 2 mm long respectively). Recently there has been consensus that the outer corolla of *E. wettsteiniana* has yellow blotches present, which are not present on *E. disperma*.

When determining between the two species it would be best to consider all the potential differences.

DISTRIBUTION

Endemic. South Island, West Coast Karama, Denniston Plateau, Lake Brunner. Up to 600 m a.s.l.

HABITAT

Wet tussock grassland mixed with cushion bog and open channels and pans of cobbles.



Denniston Plateau. Photographer: Melissa Hutchison, Date taken: 24/05/2025, Licence: CC BY-NC.



Denniston Plateau. Photographer: Melissa Hutchison, Date taken: 24/05/2025, Licence: CC BY-NC.

GENUS

Euphrasia

FAMILY

Orobanchaceae

AUTHORITY

Euphrasia wettsteiniana Du Rietz

SYNONYMS

Anagosperra dispernum Wettstein, Euphrasia disperma (Hook, f.) Cheeseman 1906, Siphonidium longiflorum Armstrong, Euphrasia longiflora M. Vahl, Euphrasia longiflora Kirk.

TAXONOMIC NOTES

In, du Rietz (1931) he suggested: *Euphrasia wettsteiniana* is a highly polymorphic species, containing a series of forms differing from each other especially in the length of the corolla-tube and in the form of the leaves. A detailed account of this polymorphy must be based upon studies in the field. In order to give some idea of it, however, I shall describe some distinct forms represented in the herbarium-material available to myself at present, leaving the question open whether the describing and naming of such forms will prove to be of any value when a more detailed study of the polymorphy of this species has been carried out.

The above detailed description is an amalgamation of the four descriptions in du Rietz (1931).

ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes

ENDEMIC GENUS

No

ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

FLOWERING

(October-) November – April (-May).

FRUITING

November – May.

LIFE CYCLE AND DISPERSAL

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

WETLAND PLANT INDICATOR STATUS RATING

OBL: Obligate Wetland

Almost always is a hydrophyte, rarely in uplands (non-wetlands).

ETYMOLOGY

euphrasia: Eye-medicine

wettsteiniana: Named after Richard Wettstein, (30 June 1863 – 10 August 1931) Austrian Botanist.

NVS CODE

EUPWET

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2017 | Threatened – Nationally Vulnerable | Qualifiers: RR

2012 | Threatened – Nationally Vulnerable | Qualifiers: DP

2009 | At Risk – Naturally Uncommon

2004 | Range Restricted

[Jump to current conservation status](#)

REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

- Allan HH. 1961. Flora of New Zealand, Volume I. Indigenous Tracheophyta: Psilopsida, Lycopsidea, Filicopsida, Gymnospermae, Dicotyledones. Government Printer, Wellington, NZ. 1085 p. Pages 859-860.
- du Rietz. G. E. 1931: The long-tubed New Zealand species of *Euphrasia* (= *Siphonidium* Armstr.). Svensk Botanisk Tidskrift. Volume 25: Pages 108-25.
- 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
- Webb, C.J. and Simpson, M.J., 2001. *Seeds of New Zealand gymnosperms and dicotyledons*. Manuka Press. Pages 335 & 338.

ATTRIBUTION

Fact sheet prepared for NZPCN by M.D. Ward (13 November 2020) Description adapted from du Rietz (1931).

MORE INFORMATION

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

PDF DATE

27 May 2026