

# Gentianella cerina

## COMMON NAMES

Auckland Island gentian

## BIOSTATUS

Native – Endemic taxon

## CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2023 | At Risk – Naturally Uncommon | Qualifiers: IE, RR

[Jump to previous conservation statuses](#)

## CATEGORY

Vascular

## STRUCTURAL CLASS

Herbs - Dicotyledons other than Composites

## FLOWER COLOURS

Violet/Purple, White

## DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Plants polycarpic, height in flower 90–170 mm. Caudex unbranched or branched, 110–200 mm long. Flowering stems terminal only or terminal and lateral, 3–12 per plant, 1.1–3.1 mm diameter, lateral flowering stems decumbent, flowering stem leaves 3–4 pairs per stem (not applicable in cases where no rosette is present on multi-branched plants), lowest pedicels from ½ up flowering stem to near apex of flowering stem. Rosette of leaves absent, not very distinct, or distinct from flowering plants leaves; leaves narrowly elliptic, 36.6–53.1 × 8.4–12.6 mm wide, flat, not recurved, margins thickened, apex rounded and retuse; petiole distinct, 11–13 mm long, 4.7–6.3 mm wide at leaf base. Flowering stem leaves the same but smaller. Pedicels 1 or 2 per leaf axil, 6.2–17.8 mm long, 1.2–1.3 mm diameter. Flowers 15 to more than 100 per plant, 9.9–14.1 mm long. Calyx 9.3–12.2 mm long, hairs at calyx–corolla fusion line present; lobes 7.5–10.3 mm long, 2.4–3.4 mm wide at base, plane, apices obtuse (widest near the apex), margins smooth, sinus hairs absent. Corolla 8.4–11.8 mm long, white or tinted red to purple, veins colourless or purple; tube 2.1–4.4 mm long; lobes 6.3–8.8 × 3.8–5.0 mm, hairs below sinus absent or present; nectary 1.2–1.5 mm from corolla base. Filaments 4.9–6.9 mm long from corolla base, 0.70–0.85 mm wide. Anthers 0.9–1.7 mm long, extrorse at anthesis; pollen yellow. Stigma purple or colourless. Ovules 13–37 per ovary. Capsule 6.5–12 mm long.

## SIMILAR TAXA

*Gentianella cerina* differs from the only other species present on the Auckland Islands, *G. concinna* by its perennial growth habit; decumbent flowering stems; calyces that are 9.3–12.2 mm long, and pandurate calyx lobes which are rounded at the apices, with the corolla shorter than the calyx and with leaves which are 36–53 × 8.4–12.6 mm

## DISTRIBUTION

Endemic. New Zealand: Auckland Islands

## HABITAT

Coastal turflands, *Chionochloa antarctica* tussocklands and *Poa littorosa* grasslands, *Marsippospermum gracile* and *Pleurophyllum hookeri* sedgeland or bare ground on summit fellfields, rarely in forest

## THREATS

A Naturally Uncommon, range-restricted, island endemic. Abundant on the islands it is under no obvious threat. The Auckland Islands are administered as a Nature Reserve and are part of a World Heritage Park with access strictly controlled by the New Zealand Department of Conservation.



Enderby Island. Photographer: John Barkla, Licence: CC BY.



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## GENUS

Gentianella

## FAMILY

Gentianaceae

## AUTHORITY

Gentianella cerina (Hook.f.) T.N.Ho et S.W.Liu

## SYNONYMS

Gentiana cerina Hook.f., G. cerina f. suberecta Kirk, G. cerina var. suberecta (Kirk) Cheeseman, G. campbellii Hombr. et Jacquinot ex Decne, Chionogentias cerina (Hook.f.) L.G. Adams

## ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes

## ENDEMIC GENUS

No

## ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

## FLOWERING

December –April

## FRUITING

March - May

## LIFE CYCLE AND DISPERSAL

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

## PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

Difficult. Should not be removed from the wild

## ETYMOLOGY

**gentianella:** Little Gentiana (named after Gentius, 6th century king of Illyria, who found the roots of the yellow gentian to have a healing effect on his malaria-stricken troops)

## PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2017 | At Risk – Naturally Uncommon | Qualifiers: IE, RR

2012 | At Risk – Naturally Uncommon | Qualifiers: IE, RR

2009 | At Risk – Naturally Uncommon | Qualifiers: IE

2004 | Range Restricted

[Jump to current conservation status](#)

## REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

Glenny, D. 2004: A revision of the genus Gentianella in New Zealand. New Zealand Journal of Botany 42: 361-530.  
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 for NZPCN by P.J. de Lange (October 2004). Description modified from Glenny (2004)

## MORE INFORMATION

<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/gentianella-cerina/>

## PDF DATE

27 May 2026