

Gentianella corymbifera subsp. corymbifera

COMMON NAME

grassland gentian, tall gentian

SYNONYMS

Gentiana corymbifera Kirk, *Gentiana bellidifolia* var. *vacillata* Kirk, *Chionogentias corymbifera* (Kirk) L.G.Adams, *Gentiana pleurogynoides* var. *rigida* Kirk, *Gentiana bellidifolia* var. *vacillata* Kirk

FAMILY

Gentianaceae

AUTHORITY

Gentianella corymbifera (Kirk) Holub subsp. *corymbifera*

FLORA CATEGORY

Vascular – Native

ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes

ENDEMIC GENUS

No

ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Herbs - Dicotyledons other than Composites

NVS CODE

GNTCOR

CHROMOSOME NUMBER

$2n = 36$

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2017 | Not Threatened

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2012 | Not Threatened

2009 | Not Threatened

2004 | Not Threatened

DISTRIBUTION

Endemic. New Zealand: South Island (Nelson, Marlborough, Canterbury and Otago, mostly east of the Main Divide, and scarce in Otago)

HABITAT

Montane to alpine. In short-tussock and tall-tussock grassland, rough pasture on hill slopes, within intermontane basins, along river terraces, and more rarely in ephemeral or permanent wetlands. Being unpalatable to livestock it is common in heavily browsed montane to alpine grasslands.



Tarndale, January. Photographer: John Smith-Dodsworth, Licence: CC BY-NC.



Gentianella corymbifera subsp. *corymbifera*, Isolation Basin. Photographer: Gillian M. Crowcroft, Licence: All rights reserved.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Plants biennial, monocarpic rarely polycarpic, height in flower 60–470 mm. Caudex unbranched, 15–70 mm long. Root branched or unbranched, 1.3–11.3 mm diameter at stem base. Flowering stems terminal only or terminal and lateral with more slender lateral branches from among the rosette leaves, 1–9 per plant, terminal flowering stem 3.0–11.3 mm diameter at base, green, tinted crimson or purple-black, lateral flowering stems erect, internodes 2–6 pairs per stem, lowest pedicels from near base of flowering stem, halfway up flowering stem, or near apex of flowering stem. Rosette of leaves present and distinct from flowering stem leaves, leaves narrowly elliptic to elliptic or ovate, leaf apex acute to rounded, 41.0–168.0 × 6.5–31 mm, sometimes tinted crimson or purple-black below or on the petiole, usually flat, sometimes V-shaped or channelled at the petiole, petiole indistinct, 10–40 mm long, 4.0–18.5 mm wide at leaf base. Flowering stem leaves ovate, apex acute, sessile. Flowers 7–110 per plant, 14–23 mm long, rarely female. Pedicels 1–3 per leaf axil, 3–50 mm long, 0.9–1.5 mm diameter. Calyx 6.8–18 mm long, 2.7–4.0 mm wide at base, green or tinted purple-black, crimson, or bronze; lobes 2.9–11.3 × 2.7–6.8 mm, plane, apices acute, margins smooth or minutely denticulate, hairs at sinuses present or absent. Corolla 14.0–21.1 mm long, white, rarely flushed with pink; tube 2.5–12 mm long; lobes 7.5–15.5 × 5.1–10.2 mm, hairs below sinus present; nectary 0.7–1.5 mm from corolla base. Filaments 7.2–12.8 mm long from corolla base, 1.1–1.6 mm wide. Anthers 1.9–3.2 mm long, anther wall yellow or blue-black, mouth yellow, extrorse, rarely introrse at anthesis. Stigma colourless. Ovules 36–68 per ovary. Capsules 12–19 mm long.

SIMILAR TAXA

Distinguished from other *Gentianella* by the very stout terminal flowering stem (3.0–11.3 mm diameter), which may bear up to 110 flowers; by the petiole of the rosette leaves which is very wide (4.0–18.5 mm); and by the usually large, thick, fleshy, flat rosette leaves which often have a V-shaped petiole. Distinguished from subsp. *gracilis* by its monocarpic life form; by the terminal flowering stem 3.0–11.3 mm diameter when fresh; leaves 41–168 × 6.5–31 mm wide; calyx lobes 2.7–4.0 mm wide; corolla 14.0–21.1 mm long; and by the filaments 1.1–1.6 mm wide.

FLOWERING

December – March

FLOWER COLOURS

Red/Pink, White

FRUITING

February – May

LIFE CYCLE

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)

corymbifera: Corymb-bearing

WHERE TO BUY

Not commercially available.

ATTRIBUTION

Fact Sheet for NZPCN prepared by P.J. de Lange (1 November 2004). Description modified from Glenny (2004)

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

MORE INFORMATION

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