

# Gentianella filipes

## COMMON NAMES

gentian

## BIOSTATUS

Native – Endemic taxon

## CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2023 | At Risk – Naturally Uncommon | Qualifiers: DPS, DPT, RR

[Jump to previous conservation statuses](#)

## CATEGORY

Vascular

## STRUCTURAL CLASS

Herbs - Dicotyledons other than Composites

## FLOWER COLOURS

Violet/Purple, White

## DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Plants annual, monocarpic, height in flower 20–140 mm. Caudex unbranched, 25–35 mm long. Root 0.5–0.9 mm diam. at stem base. Flowering stems terminal and lateral, 2–8 per plant, central flowering stem 0.9–1.9 mm diameter at base; stem colour green, tinted crimson or purple-black, lateral flowering stems erect to decumbent, flowering stem leaves 1–5 pairs per stem, lowest pedicels from near base of flowering stem to near apex of flowering stem. Rosette of leaves absent from flowering plants, basal leaves narrowly elliptic or elliptic or ovate, 9–20 × 2.6–6.4 mm wide, green, flat, not recurved, apex acute or rounded; petiole distinct or indistinct, 3.5–8.8 mm long, 1.0–2.6 mm wide at leaf base. Flowering stem leaves elliptic to ovate, apices rounded or acute. Pedicels 1 per leaf axil, 4.5–32 mm long, 0.7–1.8 mm diameter, 0.5–0.7 mm diameter. Flowers 1–81 per plant, 8.2–13 mm long, sometimes female. Calyx 6.0–8.5 mm long, green tinted purple-black, at lower lobe margins, hairs at calyx–corolla fusion line absent or present; 4–5-lobed, lobes 2.6–5.0 mm long, 2.2–5.2 mm wide at base, strongly ridged between the lobes, plane or recurved, margins smooth, apices acute, sinus hairs abundant. Corolla 7.6–12 mm long, white, sometimes tinted purple at corolla tips; tube 2.6–4.6 mm long; lobes 4.5–8.3 × 3.3–5.9 mm wide, hairs below sinus absent or present; nectary 0.4–1.1 mm from corolla base. Filaments 4.3–7.8 mm long from corolla base, 0.6–0.9 mm wide. Anthers 0.8–1.4 mm long, anther wall blue-black, occasionally pale blue, mouth yellow, extrorse or horizontal at anthesis. Stigma colourless. Ovules 11–32 per ovary. Capsule 8–9 mm long.

## SIMILAR TAXA

Recognised by its gregarious growth habit, annual life cycle, abundant flowers, absence of basal rosettes in flowering plants, and small tap root. The base of each calyx lobe is recurved and there is a prominent ridge on the calyx below each sinus. The calyx lobes are mostly short and wide, and very unequal. The flowers are small (12–13 mm long) as are the basal leaves (to 20 mm long).

## DISTRIBUTION

Endemic. New Zealand: South Island (north-west Nelson)

## HABITAT

Alpine grasslands dominated by *Poa colensoi*, marble scree and talus, rock crevices, peat bog, gravel riverbed. Mainly overlying marble, where it is usually found in skeletal soils.



At Mt Arthur. Photographer: John Smith-Dodsworth, Licence: CC BY-NC.



Gentianella filipes. Photographer: Sandra Wotherspoon, Licence: CC BY-NC.

## THREATS

A Naturally Uncommon, range-restricted endemic which is sparsely to locally abundant. There are no known threats. All the known populations occur within Kahurangi National Park.

## GENUS

Gentianella

## FAMILY

Gentianaceae

## AUTHORITY

Gentianella filipes (Cheeseman) T.N.Ho et S.W.Liu

## SYNONYMS

Gentiana filipes Cheeseman, Chionogentias filipes (Cheeseman) L.G.Adams

## ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes

## ENDEMIC GENUS

No

## ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

## FLOWERING

January – 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

## WHERE TO BUY

Not Commercially Available

## 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)

**filipes**: Thread-like stalks

## NVS CODE

GENFIL

## CHROMOSOME NUMBER

2n = 36

## PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

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

2012 | At Risk – Naturally Uncommon | Qualifiers: RR

2009 | At Risk – Naturally Uncommon

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

**MORE INFORMATION**

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

**PDF DATE**

25 May 2026