

# Geranium traversii

## COMMON NAME

Chatham Island geranium

## SYNONYMS

*Geranium traversii* var. *elegans* Cockayne

## FAMILY

Geraniaceae

## AUTHORITY

*Geranium traversii* Hook.f.

## FLORA CATEGORY

Vascular – Native

## ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes

## ENDEMIC GENUS

No

## ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

## STRUCTURAL CLASS

Herbs - Dicotyledons other than Composites

## NVS CODE

GERTRA

## CHROMOSOME NUMBER

2n = 54, 54-56

## CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

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

## PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2009 | At Risk – Naturally Uncommon | Qualifiers: IE

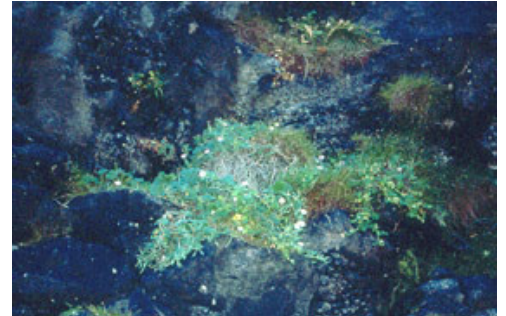
2004 | Range Restricted

## DISTRIBUTION

Endemic. Chatham Islands group. Known from all the main islands, islets and rock stacks except The Forty Fours, Sisters, Pyramid and Western Reef.

## HABITAT

Coastal cliffs, consolidated or mobile sand dunes, steep peat-filled crevices, limestone cliffs and rocks, rock crevices and erosion hollows.



Point Gap, Chatham Islands (January).  
Photographer: John Smith-Dodsworth



Mangere Island. Photographer: Peter de Lange

## FEATURES

Leafy, silvery grey to greyish-green, rosette-forming perennial herb forming patches up to 0.8 × 0.6 m. Caulorrhiza stout, deeply descending, woody at base, usually branched near ground level, often stoloniferous, up to 30 mm diameter, densely covered in persistent, frayed, petiole and stipule remnants. Stem and leaves usually densely covered in silvery hairs. Basal leaves on slender petioles up to 220 mm long. Stipules broad-ovate, cuspidate. Lamina 15-100 mm diameter, broad-reniform, orbicular, mostly lobed to ½ way but sometimes deeper; lobes 5-7(-8), cuneate, often toothed or lobed further. Cauline leaves similar but smaller. Flowers solitary 20-25(-30) mm diameter; peduncles up to 100 mm long, retrorsely hairy; bracteoles narrow-lanceolate, subacuminate. Sepals 7-11 × 2-4 mm, narrow-ovate to broad-ovate, densely covered with grey hairs, cuspidate. Petals 12(-16) × 10(-14) mm, broad-obovate or obovate-oblong, shortly clawed, pink or white, rarely pale purple, in all usually with up to 5 more darkly pigmented, longitudinal veins. Stamens < or > pistil. Mericarps silky hairy; beak 8-24 mm long. Seed 2.2-2.8 mm long, surface dull, dark brown, red-brown, dark purple-brown to black-brown, elliptic-oblong, not compressed, cells of primary reticulum, 4-6-sided, broadly oblong to isodiametric (0.04-0.15 mm long)

## SIMILAR TAXA

Easily distinguished from all other indigenous and naturalised New Zealand geraniums by the stout rootstock and stems; by the leaves densely clad in more or less silvery hairs; and by the inflorescences bearing only sparse eglandular (never glandular) hairs with mainly pink or white (rarely pale purple) flowers with corollas up to 25 mm diameter.

## FLOWERING

July-June (peaking in summer)

## FLOWER COLOURS

Red/Pink, White

## FRUITING

July-June

## LIFE CYCLE

Seed dispersed by wind, ballistic projection and possibly attachment (Thorsen et al., 2009).

## PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

Easily grown from fresh seed. Very amenable to cultivation thriving in most situations. Does not like excessive moisture and does best in full sun. In the wild it has a wide range of flower colours (white through pink to almost purple) and the leaves are occasional purple-coloured. Further selections may be rewarding. It is one of the few Chatham Islands endemics that is easily grown almost anywhere in New Zealand.

## THREATS

Not threatened. However, it has probably declined from large parts of its former range on Chatham and Pitt Islands. In some sites it may be threatened by invasive weeds, especially marram grass (*Ammophila arenaria*). It remains abundant and secure on all the outer vegetated islands except the Sisters, Forty Fours, Pyramid and Western Reef.

## ETYMOLOGY

**geranium:** From the Greek *geranos* 'crane', the fruit of the plant resembling the head and beak of this bird, hence the common name cranesbill.

**traversii:** Named after William Thomas Locke Travers (1819-1903) who was an Irish lawyer, magistrate, politician, explorer, naturalist, photographer. He lived in New Zealand from 1849 and was a fellow of the Linnean Society.

## ATTRIBUTION

Fact Sheet prepared by P.J. de Lange 14 April 2008. Description adapted from Aedo et al. (2005) supplemented with observations based on fresh and cultivated specimens.

## REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

Aedo, C., C. Navarro, and M. L. Alarcón. 2005a. Taxonomic revision of *Geranium* sections *Andina* and *Chilensia* (Geraniaceae). *Botanical Journal of the Linnean Society* 149: 1-68.

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

**CITATION**

Please cite as: de Lange, P.J. (Year at time of access): *Geranium traversii* Fact Sheet (content continuously updated). New Zealand Plant Conservation Network. <https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/geranium-traversii/> (Date website was queried)

**MORE INFORMATION**

<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/geranium-traversii/>