

Geum leiospermum

COMMON NAMES

geum, mountain avens

BIOSTATUS

Native – Endemic taxon

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2023 | Not Threatened

[Jump to previous conservation statuses](#)

CATEGORY

Vascular

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Herbs - Dicotyledons other than Composites

FLOWER COLOURS

White

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Erect herb up to 250 mm tall at flowering, arising from a slender stock. Basal leaves rosulate, up to 120 mm long, sparsely to densely clad in slender white-pilose hairs, pinnate; lateral leaflets in up to 10 pairs, reduced and often minute; terminal leaflet 10-25 mm long, serrate-dentate; cauline leaves few and bract-like, deeply toothed. Peduncle up to 250 mm tall. Scapes up to 250 mm long, simple to sparingly branched, (1-)2-4-flowered, distinctly pubescent, hairs in mixtures of short and long. Flowers 6-9 mm diameter. Petals (1-)5 mm long, white, suborbicular. Receptacle elongate, villous. Achenes numerous, c.2 mm long, narrow-oblong, glabrous, occasionally with a few hairs on shoulder; style minute, glabrous, recurved.

SIMILAR TAXA

Reduced forms of *Geum leiospermum*, bearing only one flower are superficially similar to *G. pusillum* Petrie a species which usually has solitary flowers. From such plants *G. leiospermum* differs by the hairs of the peduncle which are intermixed (long/short) rather than uniformly short, and also by the lateral leaflets which are usually distinctly more reduced in relation to the terminal leaflet.

DISTRIBUTION

Endemic. New Zealand: North (Mt Egmont, Ruahine Range) South and Stewart Islands

HABITAT

Montane to subalpine, in scrub, bogs, herbfield, tussock grassland, fell field, snowbanks, and streambanks.

GENUS

Geum

FAMILY

Rosaceae

AUTHORITY

Geum leiospermum Petrie

SYNONYMS

Oncostylus leiospermus (Petrie) F.Bolle



Ruahine range, February. Photographer: John Smith-Dodsworth, Licence: CC BY-NC.



Geum leiospermum, Old Womans Range. Photographer: John Barkla, Licence: CC BY.

ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes

ENDEMIC GENUS

No

ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

FLOWERING

November – February

FRUITING

January – April

LIFE CYCLE AND DISPERSAL

Hooked achenes dispersed by attachment (Thorsen et al., 2009).

PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

Easily grown in pots in an alpine house, and in cooler climates within a rock garden. Best grown from fresh seed.

ETYMOLOGY

geum: Possibly from the Greek geuo 'to give a pleasant flavour', the roots of some species being aromatic.

NVS CODE

GEULEI

CHROMOSOME NUMBER

2n = 70

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2017 | Not Threatened

2012 | Not Threatened

2009 | Not Threatened

2004 | Not Threatened

[Jump to current conservation status](#)

REGIONAL CONSERVATION STATUSES

Otago: 2025 | Regionally Not Threatened | Qualifiers: TL Help

The regional threat classification system leverages off the national assessments in the NZTCS, providing information relevant for the regional context. Otago conservation status information is sourced from the "[Conservation Status of Indigenous Vascular Plants in Otago, 2025](#)" Jarvie S et al. (2025) report.

REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

Allan, H.H. 1961: Flora of New Zealand. Vol. I. Government Printer, Wellington

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.; Sykes, W.R.; Garnock-Jones, P.J. 1988: Flora of New Zealand. Vol. IV. Naturalised Pteridophytes, Gymnosperms, Dicotyledons. 4. Christchurch, New Zealand, Botany Division, D.S.I.R.

ATTRIBUTION

Description adapted from Allan (1961) and Webb et al. (1988)

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MORE INFORMATION

<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/geum-leiospermum/>

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