

Geum pusillum

COMMON NAMES

geum

BIOSTATUS

Native – Endemic taxon

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

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

[Jump to previous conservation statuses](#)

CATEGORY

Vascular

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Herbs - Dicotyledons other than Composites

FLOWER COLOURS

White

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Diminutive, purple-brown to bronze-green, herb forming diffuse, prostrate patches. Plants at flowering 10-100 mm tall. Root stock slender, ± ascending, apex densely covered in long persistent, fibrous leaf remnants. Basal leaves up to 25(-45) mm long, pinnate; lateral leaflets small, in up to 5-(7) pairs; terminal leaflet 3-7(-10) mm long; lamina suborbicular, crenate-dentate, occasionally obscurely 3-5-lobed, hairs strigose, white, sparse; lateral leaflets 3-5 pairs, similar to basal leaves but smaller. Scapes 10-100 mm tall at flowering, bracts (0-)1(-3), pubescent. Flowers solitary, minute; calyx-lobes ovate. Petals 5-6, white, (0.9-)1.2-1.5 mm long, ± oblong to somewhat oblong-truncate. Receptacle elongate, villous. Achenes minute, glabrous, obliquely obovoid-oblong, style remnant minute, recurved.

SIMILAR TAXA

Geum pusillum is superficially similar to reduced forms of *G. leiospermum* Petrie which may bear only solitary flowers. From such plants *G. pusillum* differs by the pubescent peduncle which lacks the intermixed long hairs usually found in *G. leiospermum*, and also by the lateral leaflets which are usually not as reduced in relation to the terminal leaflet

DISTRIBUTION

Endemic. New Zealand: Central Otago (Old Man and Garvie Ranges)

HABITAT

Alpine. Inhabiting snow banks and flushes. Usually found within *Ranunculus* L. or *Kelleria* Endl. mats, or amongst *Coprosma niphophila* Orchard.

GENUS

Geum

FAMILY

Rosaceae

AUTHORITY

Geum pusillum Petrie

SYNONYMS

Oncostylus pusillus (Petrie) F.Bolle



Old Man range, January. Photographer: John Smith-Dodsworth, Licence: CC BY-NC.

ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes

ENDEMIC GENUS

No

ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

FLOWERING

November – February

FRUITING

December- March

LIFE CYCLE AND DISPERSAL

Achenes are dispersed by wind (Thorsen et al., 2009).

PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

Can be grown in pots in an alpine house. Best from fresh seed.

WHERE TO BUY

Not Commercially Available.

ETYMOLOGY

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

pusillum: Insignificant, weak

NVS CODE

GEUPUS

CHROMOSOME NUMBER

2n = 70

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

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

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

2009 | Not Threatened

2004 | Not Threatened

[Jump to current conservation status](#)

REGIONAL CONSERVATION STATUSES

Otago: 2025 | Regionally At Risk – Regionally Naturally Uncommon | Qualifiers: DPS, DPT, NR, NS, NStr, RR, Sp, St, 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 based on herbarium specimens and both Allan (1961) and Webb et al. (1988)

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NZPCN FACT SHEET CITATION

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

MORE INFORMATION

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

PDF DATE

08 June 2026