Geum uniflorum

COMMON NAMES
alpine 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
Cream, White

DETAILED DESCRIPTION
Low-growing, loosely mat-forming, strongly rhizomatous herb up to 200 mm tall at flowering, arising from a ± stout, initially fleshy, ultimately woody stock. Basal leaves up to 120 mm long, imparipinnate, glossy dark green fading to dark red, areolate, glabrate to moderately pilose, margins lobulate-crenate, undulose, fringed with a dense covering of harsh golden yellow hairs, hydathodes white, conspicuous; lateral leaflets in 1-2(-5) pairs, all very reduced and lowest rudimentary; terminal leaflet 10-40 mm long, crenate-dentate and sometimes obscurely lobed; cauline leaves reduced to small, toothed bracts. Scape up to 200 mm long, finely pubescent, intermixed with longer, wispy, multicellular glandular hairs. Flowers solitary, up to 25 mm diameter. Calyx pubescent and villous, lobes c.6 mm long, narrow-ovate, bracteoles minute, deeply bifid. Petals 7-17 mm long, white or creamy white, broadly ovate. Disc crimson. Anthers purple. Achenes numerous, c. 2 mm. long, densely pilose especially on margins; style remnant c.5 mm long, apex hooked.

Hunter Mountains, Fiordland. Photographer: Jesse Bythell, Date taken: 18/12/2012, Licence: CC BY-NC.

Tapoiti Valley. Photographer: Melissa Hutchison, Licence: CC BY-NC.

SIMILAR TAXA
Allied to Geum divergens Cheeseman with which it shares a strongly rhizomatous growth habit and large flowers. From that species it is distinguished by its smaller overall dimensions, open, leafy rosettes; leaves which are adaxially areolate, glossy dark green fading to dark red with age; with more or less undulate, lobulate-crenate leaf margins which are fringed with dense golden hairs and conspicuous white hydathodes; pubescent petioles and peduncles with intermixed longer multicellular glandular hairs; and solitary white flowers up to 25 mm diameter, with a central crimson eye, ringed with purple anthers.

DISTRIBUTION
Endemic. New Zealand. South and Stewart Islands

HABITAT
Subalpine to alpine (up to 1800 m a.s.l.). In herbfield, on rock ledges, and in moist tussock grassland

GENUS
Geum

FAMILY
Rosaceae

AUTHORITY
Geum uniflorum Buchanan

SYNONYMS
Oncostylus uniflorus (Buchanan) F.Bolle

ENDEMIC TAXON
Yes

ENDEMIC GENUS
No

ENDEMIC FAMILY
No

FLOWERING
November - February

FRUITING
December - March

LIFE CYCLE AND DISPERSAL
Pappate achenes are dispersed by wind (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.
uniflorum: One flowered

NVS CODE
GEUUNI

CHROMOSOME NUMBER
2n = 42

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 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)
Some of this factsheet information is derived from Flora of New Zealand Online and is used under a Creative Commons Attribution 3.0 New Zealand licence.

MORE INFORMATION

https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/geum-uniflorum/

PDF DATE

09 July 2026