Gratiola concinna

BIOSTATUS
Native – Endemic taxon

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS
2023 | Threatened – Nationally Vulnerable | Qualifiers: DPR, DPS, DPT, RR
Jump to previous conservation statuses

CATEGORY
Vascular

STRUCTURAL CLASS
Herbs - Dicotyledons other than Composites

FLOWER COLOURS
Purple, White, Yellow

DETAILED DESCRIPTION
Procumbent, widely creeping much branched and intertangled perennial herb forming leafy mats; branches slender, rooting at nodes, filiform, usually ascending at apices, up to 200 mm long, 0.7–0.9 mm diameter, dark green, dark green purple-spotted or maroon-red, puberulent to ± glabrescent hairs at apices initially copious, sub-retrorse to patent, eglandular, 0.8–1.1 mm long, soon shedding leaving sparse to abundant subsessile to sessile, viscid, glandular admixed with sparse, longer eglandular hairs on older stems, internodes variable, usually 2.4–4.6 mm, sometimes very widely spaced, especially on longer stems. **Leaves** fleshy, nerves not evident, sessile, rarely shortly petiolate, petioles 0.8–1.2 mm, glabrous or puberulent, hairs as for stems; lamina 4.0–7.6 × 2.0–5.8 mm, oblong, obovate to suborbicular, apex obtuse, ± obtusely toothed rarely subentire or entire, yellow-green, dark green, usually with purple or maroon blotching or stitch marks near teeth, or rarely with upper lamina surface irregularly maroon spotted, puberulent, hairs mostly sessile to subsessile glandular, admixed with sparse to sometimes copious 0.6–1.0 mm, eglandular hairs. **Flowers** 10–12 mm long, solitary in bract axils, faintly sweet-scented. **Pedicels** 2.0–2.5 mm, distal end wider than proximal, puberulent, glabrate, hairs patent, eglandular. **Bracteoles** 1.2–2.1 × 0.5–1.1 mm, linear-oblong, oblong, apex obtuse to subacute, green with dark maroon apex, puberulent, hairs patent, 0.5–0.8 mm eglandular. **Sepals** 2–3, free, erect, 0.5–0.8 × 0.2–0.6 mm, narrowly-lanceolate to oblong, acute, green with dark maroon apex, puberulent, hairs patent, 0.3–0.6 mm eglandular. **Corolla** white, throat yellow or pale pinkish yellow; tube 7.6–8.2 mm long, funnelform, veins 10–16 pale pink or maroon, externally eglandular hairy along veins, hairs patent, 0.3–0.6 mm; inner surface densely covered in tangled, weakly flexuous, eglandular, yellow or pink, hairs 0.4–0.8 mm long; lobes 5, 3.2–4.0 × 4.0–4.6 mm, orbicular to broadly obovate, emarginate, widely spreading to decurved at anthesis, glabrous. **Stamens** 2, filaments 1.8–2.2 mm, white, anthers 0.4–0.6 mm, white, pollen white; staminodes 1–2, 1.6–1.8 mm, white. **Ovary** narrowly ellipsoid, 0.3–0.6 × 0.1–0.2 mm, style 1.8–2.0 mm, caducous, stigma rather broadly 3-lobed, perpendicular to style. **Capsule** ovoid 3.5–4.0 mm diameter, 4-valved, septicidial and loculicidial to base. **Seed** 0.4–0.7 mm, oblong, narrow-oblong, 2–4-angled, dark brown, surface glossy, deeply reticulate, mucilaginous when fresh.

Nelson Lakes National Park. Photographer: Jane Gosden, Date taken: 03/04/2021, Licence: CC BY-NC-SA.

Cold Stream, Egmont National Park, Dec 1995. Photographer: Colin C. Ogle, Licence: CC BY-NC.

SIMILAR TAXA
The prostrate, widely creeping mat-forming growth habit, usually very hairy stems, small leaves and conspicuous funnelform flowers readily distinguish this species from the three other indigenous *Gratiola*. New Zealand plants have been confused with the Australian *G. nana* from which they differ by their oblong, obovate to suborbicular rather than elliptic to narrow-oblong leaves, clear rather than golden glandular hairs, and larger flowers with the bracteoles longer than the sepals.

DISTRIBUTION
Indigenous. New Zealand: North Island, South Island. Very local, and it has disappeared from many earlier-known sites. Also Australia (uncommon, forms matching the New Zealand plant have only been reliably reported from Tasmania).

HABITAT
Muddy hollows in forest clearings, streamsides or in turf at the margins of lakes, rivers or ponds; sometimes aquatic at edge of shallow lakes or rivers.

THREATS
Habitat loss through wetland drainage and competition from introduced weeds.

GENUS
Gratiola

FAMILY
Plantaginaceae

AUTHORITY
Gratiola concinna Colenso

SYNONYMS
New Zealand plants have been referred to the Australian Gratiola nana Benth.

TAXONOMIC NOTES
Gratiola concinna as currently circumscribed is extremely variable and it si possible that more than one entity lurks under that name (see images of this variation in de Lange *et al.* 2010). Further study of this variation would be worthwhile.

ENDEMIC TAXON
Yes

ENDEMIC GENUS
No

ENDEMIC FAMILY
No

FLOWERING
December–February

FRUITING
March–July

LIFE CYCLE AND DISPERSAL
Mucilaginous seeds are dispersed by water and possibly wind and attachment (Thorsen et al., 2009).

PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE
Easily grow from division of whole plants and fresh seed but short-lived and difficult to maintain over time. Does best if planted in a pot which is then partially submerged in water, and kept in a sunny situation.

WETLAND PLANT INDICATOR STATUS RATING
FACW: Facultative Wetland
Usually is a hydrophyte but occasionally found in uplands (non-wetlands).

PLANT OF THE MONTH

This plant has been featured as a Plant of the Month – see Trilepidea: NZPCN newsletter for August 2020 for the full story.

ETYMOLOGY

gratiola: Little beauty
concinna: Charming, elegant

NVS CODE

GRANAN

CHROMOSOME NUMBER

2n = 30

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2017 | Threatened – Nationally Endangered | Qualifiers: CD, DP, PD, RR
2012 | Threatened – Nationally Vulnerable | Qualifiers: De
2009 | Threatened – Nationally Vulnerable | Qualifiers: De
2004 | Gradual Decline
Jump to current conservation status

REGIONAL CONSERVATION STATUSES

Auckland: 2025 | Regionally Extirpated Help
The regional threat classification system leverages off the national assessments in the NZTCS, providing information relevant for the regional context. Auckland conservation status information is sourced from the "Conservation status of vascular plant species in Tāmaki Makaurau / Auckland" Simpkins E et al. (2025) report.

REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

de Lange PJ, Heenan PB, Norton DA, Rolfe JR, Sawyer JWD. 2010. Threatened Plants of New Zealand. Canterbury University Press, Christchurch. 471 p.
Thorsen MJ, Dickinson KJM, Seddon PJ. 2009. Seed dispersal systems in the New Zealand flora. *Perspectives in Plant Ecology, Evolution and Systematics 11*: 285–309. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ppees.2009.06.001.

ATTRIBUTION

Fact Sheet prepared for NZPCN by P.J. de Lange 3 April 2004. Description by P.J. de Lange based on live plants and herbarium specimens—see also de Lange *et al.* (2010).

NZPCN FACT SHEET CITATION

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MORE INFORMATION

https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/gratiola-concinna/

PDF DATE

25 May 2026