

Grimmia plagiopodia

COMMON NAMES

dry rock moss

BIOSTATUS

Native

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2025 | Threatened – Nationally Critical | Qualifiers: DPS, DPT, OL, TO

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CATEGORY

Non-vascular

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Mosses

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Saxicolous, forming minute, rounded, bright silvery cushions on limestone rock. Stems short c.5 mm tall, closely matted together, densely and turgidly branched. Leaves crowded, broadly ovate or oblong, deeply concave; margins plane not thickened. Nerve weak and narrow. Hyaline point usually longer than lamina, wide and rough, usually branched one or more times, irregularly dentate and variably flexuose or geniculate. Cells non-sinuose; the upper ones rather large 9-12 μm , those below widely oblong. Seta very short, curved. Capsule completely immersed, almost sessile, swollen at the base on one side. Peristome teeth pale-yellow, thin, delicate, irregularly cleft at apex. Operculum conic, with a short erect beak. Calyptra small. mitriform. Spores 12 μm diameter.

SIMILAR TAXA

Distinguished from other New Zealand *Grimmia* by the capsule, which is deeply immersed amongst the leaves, basally swollen and set asymmetrically on the seta; by the broad leaves whose cells are short and wide below; and by the hyaline point which is characteristically longer than the lamina, flexuose or geniculate, usually branched one or more times, and irregularly dentate.

DISTRIBUTION

Indigenous. New Zealand: South Island (Castle Hill Basin Canterbury).

Otherwise recorded sparingly from Antarctica, Australia, South America and elsewhere throughout the world (Seppelt & Green 1998).

HABITAT

Saxicolous. Montane. Confined to limestone outcrops within the Castle Hill karstfield. Castle Hill is now surrounded by tussock grassland but it was formerly forested.

SUBSTRATE DETAILS

Saxicolous on limestone.

THREATS

Grimmia plagiopodia is known from only a single area in the Castle Hill portion of the Tresslick Basin. There it is confined to limestone outcrops, where it is threatened by rock climbing. As rock climbing has increased in popularity over the last two decades, this minute moss has seriously declined, presumably because plants are scuffed out, trampled or dislodged by ropes. Currently there is little management of the situation.

GENUS

Grimmia

FAMILY

Grimmiaceae

AUTHORITY

Grimmia plagiopodia Hedw.



SYNONYMS

Grimmia argentea R.Br.bis

ENDEMIC TAXON

No

ENDEMIC GENUS

No

ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

FRUITING

Fruiting material is known but there is no data on fruiting times.

ORTHOGRAPHIC NOTE

Sometimes misspelled as *Grimmia plagiopoda*.

NVS CODE

GRIPLA

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2014 | Threatened – Nationally Critical | Qualifiers: OL, TO

2010 | Threatened – Nationally Critical | Qualifiers: OL, TO

2005 | Threatened – Nationally Critical | Qualifiers: TO

[Jump to current conservation status](#)

REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

Sainsbury, G.O.K. 1955: A handbook of the New Zealand mosses. *Royal Society of New Zealand Bulletin* 5.

Seppelt, R.D.; Green, T.G.A. 1998: A bryophyte flora for Southern Victoria Land, Antarctica. *New Zealand Journal of Botany* 36: 617-635.

ATTRIBUTION

Factsheet Prepared for NZPCN by P.J. de Lange (29 August 2011). Description adapted from Sainsbury (1955).

MORE INFORMATION

<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/grimmia-plagiopodia/>

PDF DATE

27 May 2026