

Haastia pulvinaris var. pulvinaris

COMMON NAME

Vegetable sheep

SYNONYMS

Haastia pulvinaris Hook.f.

FAMILY

Asteraceae

AUTHORITY

Haastia pulvinaris Hook.f. var. *pulvinaris*

FLORA CATEGORY

Vascular – Native

ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes

ENDEMIC GENUS

Yes

ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Herbs - Dicotyledonous composites

CHROMOSOME NUMBER

$2n = 60$

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2017 | Not Threatened

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2012 | Not Threatened

2009 | Not Threatened

2004 | Not Threatened

DISTRIBUTION

Endemic. South Island: Marlborough to Canterbury (east of the main divide).

HABITAT

Subalpine and alpine fellfield and rocks among screes.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Stout perennial forming rounded very compact masses up to 2 x 1 m diameter; branchlets with leaves c.20 mm diameter, densely compacted. Leaves c.8-10 × 6-10 mm; apices thickened and crenulate and concealed by dense brush of long tangled slightly fulvous hairs, both surfaces or underside only clad in long hairs; veins 3-15, anastomosing above. Receptacle flat or slightly convex, c.5 mm diameter. Involucral bracts linear, obtuse to acute, glabrous except at apices. Achenes compressed, linear, c.2 mm long. Pappus-hairs flattened at base, up to 9 mm long.



Julius rocks, Nelson, January. Photographer: John Smith-Dodsworth, Licence: CC BY-NC.



Near main ridge, inland Kaikoura. Photographer: Simon Moore, Licence: CC BY-SA.

SIMILAR TAXA

Haastia pulvinaris is easily recognised by its growth habit. This is the famous vegetable sheep of the eastern South Island. Plants producing extremely compact, rounded masses up to 2 x 1 m diameter. From the other two species of *Haastia* it is easily distinguished by this growth habit, the other two species (*H. recurva* and *H. sinclairii*) having a more widely spreading, openly branched, distinctly leafy growth habit. *Haastia pulvinaris* var. *minor* is distinguished from var. *pulvinaris* by its much smaller size (only rarely forming hummocks up to 1 x 1 m), branchlets < 15 mm diameter, and by the distinctly whitish tomentum. Both varieties are occasionally sympatric and may perhaps be better treated as species. *Haastia pulvinaris* could be confused with species of *Raoulia*, especially *R. bryoides*, *R. eximia* and *R. mammillaris* with which it sometimes grows. From *Raoulia*, *Haastia* is distinguished by the anther-cells which are not tailed, and by the leaves which are > 10 mm long. Recent molecular data suggests that *Haastia* is very closely allied to *Brachyglottis*.

FLOWERING

November - January

FRUITING

December - February

LIFE CYCLE

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

PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

Difficult. Should not be removed from the wild.

ETYMOLOGY

haastia: After Haast

pulvinaris: From the Latin pulvinar 'a cushion' and -aris 'resembling', meaning resembling a cushion i.e. convex or rather flattened

WHERE TO BUY

Not commercially available

ATTRIBUTION

Description adapted from Allan (1961)

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.

MORE INFORMATION

<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/haastia-pulvinaris-var-pulvinaris/>