

# Hoheria lyallii

## COMMON NAMES

mountain lacebark

## BIOSTATUS

Native – Endemic taxon

## CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2023 | Not Threatened

[Jump to previous conservation statuses](#)

## CATEGORY

Vascular

## STRUCTURAL CLASS

Trees & Shrubs - Dicotyledons

## SIMPLIFIED DESCRIPTION

Small spreading soft-wooded deciduous tree inhabiting dryer mountain areas of the South Island. Leaves thin, covered in small hairs, widest at base and narrowing to point, margin with many uneven blunt teeth and some deeper divisions, on long stalks. Flowers white, cupped, developing into a dry narrowly-winged fruit.

## FLOWER COLOURS

Violet/Purple, White

## DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Tree up to 8 m tall, deciduous; hairs stellate; leaves heteroblastic. Juvenile leaves: lamina 13–40 × 15–40 mm, broad-elliptic to suborbicular, both surfaces sparsely to moderately hairy; apex subacute; base cordate to weakly truncate; margin deeply lobed to strongly crenate; petiole 15–52 mm long, sparsely to moderately hairy. Adult leaves: lamina 33–156 × 22–89 mm, elliptic to deltoid, adaxial and abaxial surfaces moderately to densely hairy, occasionally sparsely hairy; apex acute to subacute; margins crenate or double-crenate, often deeply lobed; base cordate to occasionally weakly truncate; petiole 10–43 mm long, moderately to densely hairy. Flowers axillary, solitary or in cymose fascicles of 2–3. Pedicels 12–25 mm long, sparsely to moderately hairy. Calyx 3.6–6.2 mm high, 7.0–9.5 mm wide, campanulate, densely hairy; lobes 5–6, 3.5–5.8 × 3.5–5.1 mm, triangular to narrowly triangular, apex acute. Petals 5(–6), 15.7–20.0 × 11.6–15.0 mm, white, oblong-orbicular to broadly oblong, adaxial surface and margin toward proximal part with scattered simple hairs, abaxial surface sparsely to moderately hairy; claw 1.5–2.5 mm long. Stamens 35–50; filaments 8.4–10.8 mm long, white, in pairs and adnate for one-quarter to three-quarters of their length, column with stellate and simple patent hairs; anthers 0.6–0.8 mm long. Carpels 8–14; ovary ovoid, 0.8–2.0 mm long, 0.8–2.0 mm diameter, densely hairy; style 8.4–10.0 mm long, pink, sparsely hairy, fused in lower half; stigma 0.3–0.4 mm diameter, capitate to slightly decurrent with style. Mericarp body 4.7–6.2 × 3.5–5.3 mm, broadly elliptic, laterally compressed; wing 1.2–2.2 mm wide, extending from upper two-thirds of dorsal surface, weakly ribbed, moderately hairy, margin irregularly toothed. Seeds 2.2–3.4 × 2.2–2.8 mm, orange brown, glabrous, semicircular to triangular, broader toward base, biconvex or with a rounded dorsal surface, sometimes with a narrow wing up to 0.4 mm wide, usually separating from mericarp at maturity. Description from Heenan et al. (2005).



Upper Otira, Arthurs pass. January.  
Photographer: John Smith-Dodsworth, Licence: CC BY-NC.



Emergent through briar, matagouri, Clarence Reserves. Photographer: Simon Moore, Licence: CC BY-SA.

## SIMILAR TAXA

Distinguishing Characters: *Hoheria lyallii* differs from *H. glabrata* by the shorter leaves which have truncate bases, moderately to densely hairy surfaces, and an acute apex. *Hoheria lyallii* and *H. glabrata* are a species pair, with *H. lyallii* confined to the drier part of the South Island, and *H. glabrata* to the wetter areas. *Hoheria glabrata* is the only species of the pair known to extend to the North Island.

## DISTRIBUTION

New Zealand: South Island where it is mostly known from eastern Canterbury and Marlborough with a disjunct population in Nelson (Kahurangi National Park)

## HABITAT

Found in montane and subalpine areas in the upper forest margins. Occasionally found on river and stream terraces where it may be found in groves.

## GENUS

*Hoheria*

## FAMILY

Malvaceae

## AUTHORITY

*Hoheria lyallii* Hook.f.

## SYNONYMS

*Plagianthus lyallii* (Hook.f.) Hook.f., *Gaya lyallii* Baker, *G. lyallii* var. *ribifolia* Kirk, *G. ribifolia* Cockayne

## ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes

## ENDEMIC GENUS

Yes

## ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

## FLOWERING

November - March

## FRUITING

April - July

## LIFE CYCLE AND DISPERSAL

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

## PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

Best from fresh seed. An extremely attractive species, unusual in the New Zealand flora for its deciduous habit. Prefers a damp soil in a sunny site, and does best in cooler climates. Dislikes humidity and will not flower in warmer climates unless it is subjected to cold treatment

## CULTIVATION

Occasionally sold by specialist garden centres.

## ETYMOLOGY

**hoheria**: Latin version of the Maori name houhere which refers to *H. populnea* and *H. glabrata*.

**lyallii**: Named after David Lyall (1817-1895), 19th century Scottish naturalist and surgeon with the Royal Navy, who explored Antarctica, New Zealand, the Arctic and North America and was a lifelong friend of Sir Joseph Hooker.

## NVS CODE

HOHLYA

## 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

Heenan, P.B.; Dawson, M.I.; Redmond, D.N.; Wagstaff, S.J. 2005: Relationships of the New Zealand mountain ribbonwoods (*Hoheria glabrata* and *H. lyallii*: Malvaceae), based on molecular and morphological data. *New Zealand Journal of Botany* 43: 527–549.

Moorfield, J. C. (2005). *Te aka : Maori-English, English-Maori dictionary and index*. Pearson Longman: Auckland, N.Z.

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

## ATTRIBUTION

Fact Sheet Prepared for NZPCN by: P.J. de Lange 3 April 2011

## NZPCN FACT SHEET CITATION

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

## MORE INFORMATION

<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/hoheria-lyallii/>

## PDF DATE

25 May 2026