

Leptinella pectinata subsp. pectinata

BIOSTATUS

Native – Endemic taxon

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2023 | Not Threatened

[Jump to previous conservation statuses](#)

CATEGORY

Vascular

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Herbs - Dicotyledonous composites

FLOWER COLOURS

White

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Monoecious, creeping, glabrate, perennial herb forming diffuse patches, or more rarely tight mats on open ground. Rhizomes at or near soil surface, stout, up to 2 mm diameter, somewhat wiry, dark, sparsely villous, glabrate to glabrescent; branches solitary, or in clusters of 4 radiating out from a flowering node, if solitary then arising if internodes are long; leaves initially clustered around shoot apex, often remaining crowded but sometimes spaced up to 20 mm apart. Short shoots absent. Roots extensive, wiry, much branched, up to 1 mm diameter. Leaves 1-pinnatifid, occasionally simple, 7-40 x 2-10 mm; blade up to 30 mm, elliptic, obovate, to broadly obovate, firmly coriaceous, dark green, finely and usually sparsely villous, glabrate, midrib not raised on ventral surface; pinnae 1-10 pairs, or absent, close-set or distant, cut to rhachis, linear to narrowly obovate, more or less cylindrical to flat, teeth usually absent, occasionally with 1-3 per pinna, these mostly on proximal margin, cut 1/2 across pinna, triangular, obtuse. Peduncles very much > leaves, 10-100 mm, ebracteate or rarely with 1 simply bract, glabrate. Capitula 4-8 mm diameter; involucre subcampanulate; involucral bracts 12-24, subequally 2- or more seriate, oblong, dark green to purple green, with 1-3 dark veins, with wide brown scarious margins; pistillate flowers 12-200, 2.25-2.75 mm long, straight, white, often with 1-2 dark stripes along corolla and ovary; corolla much > than wide, dentition equal; staminate florets more numerous than pistillate. Cypselas 2.1 x 0.7 mm, golden-brown, compressed, biconvex, slightly to deeply wrinkled.

SIMILAR TAXA

The dark green, glabrescent, narrowly elliptic to obovate leaves, bearing narrow linear to obovate, sparsely toothed pinna, and long, fine, wiry, dark green scapes and distinctive small, white capitula mark this species out from any other of the New Zealand representatives of the genus. *L. pectinata* subsp. *pectinata* differs from subsp. *willcoxii* (Cheeseman) D.G.Lloyd et C.J.Webb by its glabrate to sparsely hairy rather than glabrous rhizomes, leaves and peduncles, by its narrower leaves, bearing usually > 5 pinnae (cf < 5 in subsp. *willcoxii*), and by the pinna which are linear to narrowly obovate (cf. broadly oblong to obovate). From subsp. *villosa* (G.Simpson) D.G.Lloyd et C.J.Webb subsp. *pectinata* is easily distinguished by its glabrate rather than usually densely grey-white hairy rhizomes, leaves, peduncles and involucre, and by its white rather than yellow-red flowers.

DISTRIBUTION

Endemic. South Island, east of the main divide from Marlborough to North Otago.



Mt Hutt, January. Photographer: John Smith-Dodsworth, Licence: CC BY-NC.



Mt Cloudsley, Castle Hill. Photographer: Melissa Hutchison, Date taken: 06/11/2021, Licence: CC BY-NC.

HABITAT

A montane to alpine species (300- 1600 m.a.s.l.) species favouring bare stony ground, open clay or loess pans, ablation zones within tussock grassland, and along the margins of stable scree and talus slopes. It sometimes grows in fellfield and stony or rubbly herbfields.

GENUS

Leptinella

FAMILY

Asteraceae

AUTHORITY

Leptinella pectinata (Hook.f.) D.G.Lloyd et C.J.Webb subsp. pectinata

SYNONYMS

Cotula pectinata Hook.f., Cotula pectinata Hook.f. subsp. pectinata

ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes

ENDEMIC GENUS

No

ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

FLOWERING

November - February

FRUITING

December - April

LIFE CYCLE AND DISPERSAL

Papery cypselae are dispersed by wind and possibly attachment (Thorsen et al., 2009).

PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

Easily grown in cultivation. Best propagated by division. An attractive free flowering and rather adaptable button daisy that does well in a free draining, sunny situation. It does not relish excessive moisture and humidity.

WHERE TO BUY

Often sold by general retail and specialist native plant nurseries

ETYMOLOGY

leptinella: From the Greek word leptos (meaning slender, thin or delicate), referring to the ovary

pectinata: Comb-bearing

NVS CODE

LEPPSP

CHROMOSOME NUMBER

2n = 104

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 At Risk – Regionally Naturally Uncommon | Qualifiers: DPS, DPT, NR, NStr, NStr, Sp 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

Lloyd, D.G. 1972: A revision of the New Zealand, Subantarctic, and South American species of *Cotula*, section *Leptinella*. *New Zealand Journal of Botany* 10: 277-372.

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 (31 August 2006). Description from Lloyd (1972) - as *Cotula pectinata* subsp. *pectinata*.

MORE INFORMATION

<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/leptinella-pectinata-subsp-pectinata/>

PDF DATE

06 June 2026