Leptinella pectinata subsp. villosa

BIOSTATUS
Native – Endemic taxon

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS
2023 | Not Threatened
Jump to previous conservation statuses

CATEGORY
Vascular

STRUCTURAL CLASS
Herbs - Dicotyledonous composites

FLOWER COLOURS
Red/Pink, Yellow

Grampian range, January. Photographer: John Smith-Dodsworth, Licence: CC BY-NC.

Photographer: John Barkla, Licence: CC BY.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION
Monoecious, creeping, glabrate to villous hairy, grey-green, perennial herb forming diffuse patches, or tight mats amongst tussocks and other herbs. Rhizomes at or near soil surface, stout, up to 2 mm diameter, somewhat wiry, dark, densely villous, glabrate, rarely glabrous; 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, sparsely to densely covered in greyish-white, villous hairs or 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, desnely covered in villous hairs or 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, densely villous hairy to glabrate; pistillate flowers 12-200, 2.25-2.75 mm long, straight, yellow or yellow-red, often with 1-2 dark stripes along corolla and ovary; corolla much > than wide, dentition equal; staminate florets more numerous than pistillate. Cypsela 2.1 x 0.7 mm, golden-brown, compressed, biconvex, slightly to deeply wrinkled.

SIMILAR TAXA
Leptinella pectinata subsp. *villosa* differs from *L. pectinata* (Hook.f.) D.G.Lloyd et C.J.Webb subsp. *pectinata* by its glabrate to densely grey-white, villous hairy rather than sparsely villous hairy or glabrescent rhizomes, leaves and peduncles, and yellow to yellow-red rather than white florets. From subsp. *willcoxii* (Cheeseman) D.G.Lloyd et C.J.Webb, subsp. *villosa* differs by its hairy (rather than glabrous), narrower leaves, bearing 5 or more pinnae (cf. 5 or less in subsp. *willcoxii*), and by the pinna which are linear to narrowly obovate (cf. broadly oblong to obovate). Distinction from *L. albida* (D.G.Lloyd) D.G.Lloyd et C.J.Webb is not always as clear cut, both species mostly differ cytologically, subsp. *villosa* is usually tetraploid and *L. albida* is diploid, but some populations of subsp. *villosa* within the range of *L. albida* are diploid as well. Otherwise both taxa differ in that *L. albida* is copiously covered in silvery-white, woolly hairs and subsp. *villosa* is sparsely to densely covered in grey-white hairs.

DISTRIBUTION
Endemic. South Island, south-western Canterbury, Otago and Southland.

HABITAT
.Montane to alpine (> 300 m a.s.l.) in tussock grassland and herbfield

GENUS
Leptinella

FAMILY
Asteraceae

AUTHORITY
Leptinella pectinata subsp. villosa (G.Simpson) D.G.Lloyd et C.J.Webb

SYNONYMS
Cotula villosa G.Simpson, Cotula pectinata subsp. villosa (G.Simpson) D.G.Lloyd

ENDEMIC TAXON
Yes

ENDEMIC GENUS
No

ENDEMIC FAMILY
No

FLOWERING
November - February

FRUITING
December - April

PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE
Easily grown in cultivation. Best propagated by division. Does well in a free draining, sunny situation. It does not relish excessive moisture and humidity.

ETYMOLOGY
leptinella: From the Greek word leptos (meaning slender, thin or delicate), referring to the ovary
pectinata: Comb-bearing
villosa: From Latin (villus) meaning shaggy or hairy.

NVS CODE
LEPPSV

CHROMOSOME NUMBER
2n = 56, 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 Not Threatened | Qualifiers: TL 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.

ATTRIBUTION

Fact sheet prepared for NZPCN by P.J. de Lange (31 August 2006). Description from Lloyd (1972) - as *Cotula pectinata* subsp. *villosa*.

MORE INFORMATION

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

PDF DATE

27 May 2026