

Leucogenes grandiceps

COMMON NAME

South Island edelweiss

SYNONYMS

Gnaphalium grandiceps Hook.f., Helichrysum grandiceps (Hook.f.) Kirk

FAMILY

Asteraceae

AUTHORITY

Leucogenes grandiceps (Hook.f.) Beauverd

FLORA CATEGORY

Vascular – Native

ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes

ENDEMIC GENUS

Yes

ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Herbs - Dicotyledonous composites

NVS CODE

LEUGRA

CHROMOSOME NUMBER

2n = 28

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2017 | Not Threatened

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2012 | Not Threatened

2009 | Not Threatened

2004 | Not Threatened

DISTRIBUTION

Endemic. New Zealand: South and Stewart Islands

HABITAT

Subalpine to alpine. On rock outcrops, cliff faces, boulders within moraines, fell field and other rock strewn ground, either in the open, amongst cushion plants or in light scrub.

FEATURES

Perennial tomentose herb. Stock rather stout, woody; stems decumbent, woody at base, branches ascending; basal leaves not in subrosettes. Leaves densely to somewhat laxly imbricate, spreading, sometimes recurved, 5-10 × 2-4 mm, often apiculate, 3-5-nerved at base, obovate-cuneate, clad on both surfaces in appressed white to pale buff hairs. Peduncles hardly differentiated from branchlets. Capitula 5-15, congested into dense glomerules 9-15 mm diameter, subtended by up to 15 densely woolly leaves up to 10 mm long, forming a distinct white ray. Involucral bracts linear, acute, c.5 mm long, scarious with basal stiffening. Achenes c.1 mm. long, pappus-hairs 3-4 mm long



Kepler Mountains. Photographer: John Sawyer



Otira valley, January. Photographer: John Smith-Dodsworth

SIMILAR TAXA

Distinguished from *Leucogenes leontopodium* (Hook.f.) Beauverd by the more widely creeping growth habit; by the basal leaves not crowded into sub-rosettes; by the smaller leaves (5-10 cf. 8-20 mm long) with obtuse (rarely apiculate) rather than acute to subacute leaf apices; and by the leaves of the ray rarely > 10 mm long. Distinguished from *L. neglecta* Molloy and *L. tarahaoa* Molloy by its diploid ($2n = 28$), rather than tetraploid ($2n = 56$, *L. neglecta*) or octoploid ($2n = 112$) chromosome number. *Leucogenes neglecta* further differs from *L. grandiceps* by its long thin stems, narrowly elliptic acute leaves and floral bracts, and uniform silvery-blue colour, while *L. tarahaoa* differs by its compact, cushion forming habit, and silvery white leaves.

FLOWERING

November - March

FLOWER COLOURS

White, Yellow

FRUITING

January - April

LIFE CYCLE

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

PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

Easily grown from cuttings and fresh seed. Excellent in a pot within an alpine house, and in non-humid climates can be grown in rock gardens. Provided the root stock is kept cool can be grown in most lowland situations.

ETYMOLOGY

leucogenes: White genus

grandiceps: Big-headed

WHERE TO BUY

Occasionally available from specialist native plant nurseries.

ATTRIBUTION

Description modified 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/leucogenes-grandiceps/>