

# Leucogenes leontopodium

## COMMON NAME

North Island edelweiss

## SYNONYMS

*Helichrysum leontopodium* Hook.f., *Gnaphalium colensoi* Hook.f.

## FAMILY

Asteraceae

## AUTHORITY

*Leucogenes leontopodium* (Hook.f.) Beauverd

## FLORA CATEGORY

Vascular – Native

## ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes

## ENDEMIC GENUS

Yes

## ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

## STRUCTURAL CLASS

Herbs - Dicotyledonous composites

## NVS CODE

LEULEO

## CHROMOSOME NUMBER

2n = 28

## CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2012 | Not Threatened

## PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2009 | Not Threatened

2004 | Not Threatened

## DISTRIBUTION

Endemic. New Zealand: North Island (from Mt Hikurangi and the Central Volcanic Plateau south to the Tararua Ranges), and in the South Island (Richmond Range)

## HABITAT

Subalpine to alpine. On rock outcrops, cliff faces, and crevices. Usually in sites free of much surrounding vegetation.

## FEATURES

Stock stout, woody; stems much-branched, decumbent, woody at base; branchlets ascending. Leaves sessile, 8-20 × 4-5 mm, 3-5-nerved at base, linear- to lanceolate-oblong, acute to subacute, clad on both surfaces in silvery-white to yellowish, shining, appressed tomentum; basal leaves crowded in subrosettes, cauline densely imbricate to rather distant. Peduncles up to 100 mm long, clad in appressed foliaceous bracts. Capitula 8-15, congested into dense glomerules up to 25 mm diameter, subtended by up to 20 densely woolly lvs up to 20 mm long, forming a conspicuous white ray. Involucral bracts linear-lanceolate, c.5 mm. long, scarious with basal stiffening, toothed and ciliate towards acute apex, ± woolly on back towards tip. Achenes c.1 mm. long, pappus-hairs c.4 mm long



Tararua Forest Park. Photographer: Jeremy Rolfe



Tararua Forest Park. Photographer: Jeremy Rolfe

## SIMILAR TAXA

Distinguished from *Leucogenes grandiceps* (Hook.f.) Beauverd by the more compact growth habit; by the basal leaves crowded into sub-rosettes; by the larger leaves (8-20 cf. 5-10 mm long) with acute to subacute leaf apices rather than obtuse (rarely apiculate); and by the leaves of the ray up to 20 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. leontopodium* 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

## 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-leontopodium/>