Leucogenes leontopodium

COMMON NAMES
North Island edelweiss

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, Yellow

DETAILED DESCRIPTION
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



Jumbo, Tararua Range. Photographer: John Sawyer, Date taken: 01/02/2010, Licence: CC BY-NC.



Tararua Forest Park. Photographer: Jeremy R. Rolfe, Date taken: 28/03/1997, Licence: CC BY.

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.

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.

GENUS
Leucogenes

FAMILY
Asteraceae

AUTHORITY
Leucogenes leontopodium (Hook.f.) Beauverd

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

ENDEMIC TAXON
Yes

ENDEMIC GENUS
Yes

ENDEMIC FAMILY
No

FLOWERING
November - March

FRUITING
January - April

LIFE CYCLE AND DISPERSAL
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.

CULTIVATION
Occasionally available from specialist native plant nurseries.

ETYMOLOGY
leucogenes: White genus

NVS CODE
LEULEO

CHROMOSOME NUMBER
2n = 28

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES
2017 | Not Threatened
2012 | Not Threatened
2009 | Not Threatened
2004 | Not Threatened
Jump to current conservation status

REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING
Allan HH. 1961. Flora of New Zealand, Volume I. Indigenous Tracheophyta: Psilopsida, Lycopsida, Filicopsida, Gymnospermae, Dicotyledones. Government Printer, Wellington, NZ. 1085
Thorsen MJ, Dickinson KJM, Seddon PJ. 2009. Seed dispersal systems in the New Zealand flora. *Perspectives in Plant Ecology, Evolution and Systematics 11*: 285–309. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ppees.2009.06.001.

ATTRIBUTION
Description modified from Allan (1961)
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MORE INFORMATION

https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/leucogenes-leontopodium/

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