

Leucogenes tarahaoa

COMMON NAMES

Mount Peel edelweiss

BIOSTATUS

Native – Endemic taxon

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2023 | Threatened – Nationally Endangered | Qualifiers: OL

[Jump to previous conservation statuses](#)

CATEGORY

Vascular


STRUCTURAL CLASS

Herbs - Dicotyledonous composites

FLOWER COLOURS

Yellow

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Perennial evergreen alpine subshrub forming dense, compact cushions. Leafy stems numerous, forming erect branched rosettes, 15 × 15 mm, including leaves. Leaves alternate, sessile, spreading, 8–10 × 3–4 mm, lanceolate, apex acuminate; margin entire, smooth; clothed on both surfaces with thin shining, silvery-white, tightly appressed tomentum. Peduncles distinct, terminal on leafy stems, 20–40 mm, clothed in dense woolly silvery-white tomentum. Inflorescence 10–25 mm diameter, consisting of 3–6 capitula arranged in a flat to convex, congested, corymbose cluster packed with woolly crimped tomentum and surrounded by 10–15 spreading, lanceolate, acuminate, woolly, crimped leafy bracts, c. 10 × 4 mm, forming a pseudo-ray. Involucral bracts 2 or 3-seriate, papery, linear-lanceolate, c. 6 mm long. Receptacle flat or convex, nude. Outer florets filiform, , 6–16, in 1 series; corolla yellow, c. 4 mm long, dilated towards apex, 4-lobed. Inner florets tubular, hermaphrodite, 18–45; corolla yellow, c. 4 mm long, dilated towards apex, 5-lobed. Style arms long, curved, truncate, slightly papillose at apex. Anthers yellow, sagittate at base, with short tails. Pappus in 1 series, c. 4 mm long, slightly shorter in filiform florets, flattened at base, scabrid and shining, thickened at tips. Achene spindleshaped, c. 1.5 mm long, obscurely angled; hairs many, 0.1–0.6 mm long.

SIMILAR TAXA

A very distinctive species separated from the other three *Leucogenes* by the compact, cushion forming habit, silvery white leaves and octoploid chromosome number. A detailed account of this species and its relationships is provided by B.P.J. Molloy (NZ Journal Botany 33(1): 56–59 (1995)).

DISTRIBUTION

Endemic to Mt Peel near Geraldine, in the South Island.

HABITAT

An alpine species growing in stable soils within shaded fell-field, on ledges, and within soil-filled crevices.

THREATS

A very localised species confined to the fell field of the summits of Middle Mt Peel and the main ridge leading to Big Mt Peel. Recent field work suggests that these populations are declining although the exact cause is unclear. Browse by ungulates was evident on flowers in March 2022 (Melissa Hutchison, pers. obs.). The most significant losses have occurred on Middle Peel, where the *Leucogenes* was already considered to be very uncommon.



Big Mt Peel, Canterbury. Photographer: John Smith-Dodsworth, Licence: CC BY-NC.



Mount Peel. Jan 1993. Photographer: Barbara Mitcalfe, Licence: CC BY-NC.

GENUS

Leucogenes

FAMILY

Asteraceae

AUTHORITY

Leucogenes tarahaoa Molloy

SYNONYMS

None

ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes

ENDEMIC GENUS

Yes

ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

FLOWERING

December to February

FRUITING

February to April

LIFE CYCLE AND DISPERSAL

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

PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

Difficult. Should not be removed from the wild.

CULTIVATION

Not commercially available but plants are held by specialist growers.

ETYMOLOGY

leucogenes: White genus

CHROMOSOME NUMBER

2n = 112

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2017 | Threatened – Nationally Vulnerable | Qualifiers: DP, OL

2012 | Threatened – Nationally Vulnerable | Qualifiers: DP, OL

2009 | Threatened – Nationally Vulnerable | Qualifiers: DP, OL

2004 | Serious Decline

[Jump to current conservation status](#)

REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

Molloy, B.P.J. 1995: Two new species of *Leucogenes* (Inuleae: Asteraceae) from New Zealand, and typification of *L. grandiceps*. *New Zealand Journal of Botany* 33(1): 53-63.

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 by P.J. de Lange (25 July 2005). Description based on Molloy (1995).

NZPCN FACT SHEET CITATION

Please cite as: de Lange, P.J. (Year at time of access): *Leucogenes tarahaoa* Fact Sheet (content continuously updated). New Zealand Plant Conservation Network. <https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/leucogenes-tarahaoa/> (Date website was queried)

MORE INFORMATION

<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/leucogenes-tarahaoa/>

PDF DATE

25 May 2026