

Lobelia anceps

COMMON NAMES

New Zealand lobelia, shore lobelia

BIOSTATUS

Native

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2023 | Not Threatened | Qualifiers: SO

[Jump to previous conservation statuses](#)

CATEGORY

Vascular

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Herbs - Dicotyledons other than Composites

FLOWER COLOURS

Blue, White, Purple

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Herb forming diffuse to compact patches up to 400 mm long, with vegetative parts glabrous; sap clear. Stems erect to wide spreading or prostrate, not usually rooting at nodes; branchlets narrowly winged, grooved. Leaves very variable; petioles flat, to c.10 mm long. Lamina submembranous to ± succulent, entire or variously toothed; lamina of lower leaves 10-50 × 5-20 mm, broad-ovate to oblong-ovate, sometimes purplish, decurrent at base. Leaves becoming narrower and petioles shorter above; uppermost leaves sessile, narrow, linear to lanceolate or spatulate, 10-60 × 1-5 mm (sometimes leaf shape varies little from base to shoot apex). Peduncles 2-7 mm long, usually puberulent. Calyx lobes 0.9-1.5 mm long, linear to triangular, acute or acuminate. Corolla 6-10 mm long, white, pale blue (often deeper blue on lower lip), less commonly pale pink; lobes of lower lip 5-8 mm long, linear to oblong. Capsule 6-12 mm long, narrow-clavate to almost cylindrical

SIMILAR TAXA

Recognised by the sprawling to erect stems, entire or toothed fleshy green, yellow-green to red-green leaves, pale blue, mauve to purplish flowers, and dehiscent, 2-valved narrowly clavate to cylindrical capsule

DISTRIBUTION

Indigenous. New Zealand: Kermadec, Three Kings, North, South and Chatham Islands. Also present in Australia, South America (Chile) and South Africa

HABITAT

Coastal to lowland. Usually in exposed sites on rocky shores, cobble beaches, cliff faces, at the back of saltmarshes in and around seepages. Also along riversides and around inland lakes and/or in seepages within open lowland forest.

GENUS

Lobelia

FAMILY

Campanulaceae

AUTHORITY

Lobelia anceps L.f.



Long Bay, Coromandel, March. Photographer: John Smith-Dodsworth, Licence: CC BY-NC.



At Long Bay, Coromandel, March. Photographer: John Smith-Dodsworth, Licence: CC BY-NC.

SYNONYMS

Lobelia alata Labill

ENDEMIC TAXON

No

ENDEMIC GENUS

No

ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

FLOWERING

August - May

FRUITING

October - August

PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

Easily grown from fresh seed, stem cuttings and rooted pieces. Some forms are rather colourful. However, as a rule a little non-descript and weedy for most gardens. Kermadec Islands forms have very much wider leaves than other New Zealand plants and are worth further investigation.

WETLAND PLANT INDICATOR STATUS RATING

FACW: Facultative Wetland

Usually is a hydrophyte but occasionally found in uplands (non-wetlands).

ETYMOLOGY

lobelia: Named after Lobel, pioneer botanist

anceps: From the Latin an- 'two' and caputus 'head', meaning two-faced or two-edged

NVS CODE

LOBANC

CHROMOSOME NUMBER

$2n = 14$

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2017 | Not Threatened | Qualifiers: SO

2012 | Not Threatened

2009 | Not Threatened

2004 | Not Threatened

[Jump to current conservation status](#)

REGIONAL CONSERVATION STATUSES

Auckland: 2025 | Regionally Not Threatened | Qualifiers: DPS, DPT Help

The regional threat classification system leverages off the national assessments in the NZTCS, providing information relevant for the regional context. Auckland conservation status information is sourced from the "[Conservation status of vascular plant species in Tāmaki Makaurau / Auckland](#)" Simpkins E et al. (2025) report.

REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

Allan, H.H. 1961: Flora of New Zealand. Vol. I. Government Printer, Wellington.

Webb CJ, Sykes WR, Garnock-Jones PJ 1988. Flora of New Zealand. Vol. IV. Botany Division, DSIR, Christchurch.

ATTRIBUTION

Fact Sheet by P.J. de Lange 2 February 2006. Description based on Allan (1961), Webb et al. (1988) supplemented with observations made from fresh material

Some of this factsheet information is derived from [Flora of New Zealand Online](#) and is used under a [Creative Commons Attribution 3.0 New Zealand](#) licence.

MORE INFORMATION

<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/lobelia-anceps/>

PDF DATE

25 May 2026