

Montitega dealbata

BIOSTATUS

Native

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2023 | Not Threatened | Qualifiers: SO

[Jump to previous conservation statuses](#)

CATEGORY

Vascular

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Trees & Shrubs - Dicotyledons

SIMPLIFIED DESCRIPTION

Very low-growing woody cushion to 0.5m wide bearing erect tight-packed small narrow pointy leaves that are dark green with a white underside and producing red fruit inhabiting open upland areas. Leaves 3-5mm long by 1-2mm wide, green strip up middle underneath. Flower white, tubular.

FLOWER COLOURS

White

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Prostrate, woody shrub forming dense cushion-like patches up to 400mm diameter and 30 mm tall; branches numerous, ascending at tips; branchlets numerous, ascending. Leaves sessile, close-set, imbricate, erect, coriaceous, glabrous; lamina 3-5 × 1-2 mm, narrow-oblong to narrow-elliptic, minutely apiculate (sometimes not); adaxially glaucous to dark brown-green, abaxially white below except for midribs and margins (these same colour as adaxial leaf surface); margins more or less thickened towards base. Flowers minute, white, hairy, solitary, axillary and/or terminal. Bracts numerous, investing peduncle. Calyx-lobes broad-oblong, obtuse, ciliolate. Corolla-tube cylindric, much > calyx; lobes acute, densely hairy on upper surface. Style minutely 5-lobed. Fruit 4-6 mm diameter, globose, dark red; locules usually 5.

SIMILAR TAXA

Most likely to be confused with *Pentachondra pumila* which grows in similar places and has a superficially similar growth habit. *Pentachondra pumila* differs from *Montitega* by its adaxially dark purplish-green leaves (abaxially finely striate) which lack mucronate apices, and larger (6-8 mm diameter) bright red to orange pyriform fruits.

DISTRIBUTION

Indigenous. Australia (Tasmania) and New Zealand (North, South and Stewart Islands).

HABITAT

From sea level to alpine zones on poorly drained ground or peat bogs amongst other cushion-plants, shrubs and grasses. In northern part of its range this species is strictly alpine.

GENUS

Montitega

FAMILY

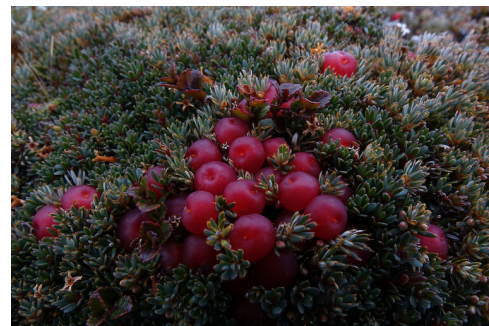
Ericaceae

AUTHORITY

Montitega dealbata (R.Br.) C.M.Weiller



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SYNONYMS

Cyathodes pumila Hook.f.; *Styphelia minuta* Sleumer; *Cyathodes dealbata* R.Br.

TAXONOMIC NOTES

The New Zealand plant was long known as *Cyathodes pumila* Hook.f., though some considered our plant conspecific with the Tasmanian *C. dealbata* R.Br. Albrecht et al. (2010) show that New Zealand and Tasmanian plants are conspecific, and further, that they are misplaced in *Cyathodes*. As such the authors established a new, monotypic genus *Montitega* (*M. dealbata* (R.Br.) C.M.Weiller) for *Cyathodes dealbata*.

ENDEMIC TAXON

No

ENDEMIC GENUS

No

ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

FLOWERING

January - March

FRUITING

January - April

LIFE CYCLE AND DISPERSAL

Fleshy drupes are dispersed by frugivory (Thorsen et al., 2009).

PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

Difficult - should not be removed from the wild

WETLAND PLANT INDICATOR STATUS RATING

FACU: Facultative Upland

Occasionally is a hydrophyte but usually occurs in uplands (non-wetlands).

ETYMOLOGY

dealbata: Whitened

NVS CODE

MONDEA

CHROMOSOME NUMBER

2n = 24

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

Otago: 2025 | Regionally Not Threatened Help

The regional threat classification system leverages off the national assessments in the NZTCS, providing information relevant for the regional context. Otago conservation status information is sourced from the "[Conservation Status of Indigenous Vascular Plants in Otago, 2025](#)" Jarvie S et al. (2025) report.

REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

Allan, H.H. 1861: Flora of New Zealand. Vol. I. Wellington, Government Printer.

Albrecht, D.E.; Owens, C.T.; Weiller, C.M.; Quinn, C.J. 2010: Generic concepts in Ericaceae: Styphelioideae - the *Monotoca* group. *Australian Systematic Botany* 23: 320-332.

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 prepared by P.J. de Lange (30 December 2010). Description adapted from Allan (1961) and Albrecht et al (2010).

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NZPCN FACT SHEET CITATION

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MORE INFORMATION

<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/montitega-dealbata/>

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