

Myosotidium hortensia

COMMON NAME

kopakopa, Chatham Island forget-me-not, kopukapuka

SYNONYMS

Myosotis hortensia Decne, *Cynoglossum nobile* Hook.f., *Myosotidium nobile* (Hook.f.) Hook.f.; *Myosotidium hortensium* (Decne.) Baill. orth.var.

FAMILY

Boraginaceae

AUTHORITY

Myosotidium hortensium (Decne.) Baill.

FLORA CATEGORY

Vascular – Native

ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes

ENDEMIC GENUS

Yes

ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Herbs - Dicotyledons other than Composites

NVS CODE

MYOHOR

CHROMOSOME NUMBER

2n = 40-42

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2012 | Threatened – Nationally Vulnerable | Qualifiers: CD, IE

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2009 | Threatened – Nationally Vulnerable | Qualifiers: CD, IE, Inc, RR

2004 | Threatened – Nationally Endangered

DISTRIBUTION

Endemic to the Chatham Islands. Found on Chatham (Rekohu), Pitt, South East, Mangere and most of the smaller islands, islets and some rock stacks.

HABITAT

Coastal cliffs, rock outcrops, sandy and rocky beaches just above the strand zone and coastal forest openings.



Myosotidium hortensia large colony.
Photographer: Geoff Walls



Myosotidium hortensia close up of flowers.
Photographer: Gillian Crowcroft

FEATURES

Robust, perennial herb, forming patches up to 1 m tall by 1.0–1.5 m diameter. Root stock stout, cylindrical, rather fleshy, where emergent covered in numerous leaf scars, becoming woody with age. Petioles 0.1–0.5 m long, grooved above, channelled below. Lamina of basal leaves up to 0.4 m across, dark green to yellow-green, broadly ovate-cordate to reniform, thick, fleshy to coriaceous; upper surface glossy, glabrous; lower surface paler, minutely and evenly covered in retrorse hairs; margins entire; veins prominent, indented above, elevated below.

Inflorescences lateral corymbose cymes, somewhat woody at base, with stem leaves; lower stem leaves similar to basal leaves, upper stem leaves smaller, oblong to broadly lanceolate or elliptic. Cymes 100–200 mm diameter, pedicels 10–15 mm long. Calyx lobes 5, 1.8–4.5 × 2.0–2.5 mm, broadly elliptic, covered in appressed hairs, apex obtuse, margin entire. Corolla 12–15 mm diameter, dark blue to pale blue, often flushing purple with age, occasionally white; lobes 5, 4.0–4.5 × 5.0–6.0 mm, orbicular, rounded, spreading, overlapping, apex obtuse; tube 2 mm long, throat partially occluded by 5 fleshy protuberances. Filaments c. 0.5 mm long, inserted near throat; anther included, 1.0–1.2 mm long. Ovary 4-lobed, style 0.7–1.0 mm long, stigma capitate. Fruit a nutlet, 10–15 mm diameter, brown to black, winged around margin; seed obovate, 7.5–9.0 mm long, testa black-brown.

SIMILAR TAXA

A distinctive and easily recognised species with large, glossy green leaves and large blue-flowered inflorescences.

FLOWERING

September - November

FLOWER COLOURS

Blue, Violet/Purple

FRUITING

October - May

PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

Easy to grow provided the root stock is kept moist. It will not tolerate drought. It also dislikes humidity. Does best in a rich, well fertilised, peaty soil on the south-side of a building, or near a dripping tap. Also does well in partial shade under trees. Avoid competition from other plants. Seed germinates well if fresh but will not store long. A white-flowered form is occasionally grown.

THREATS

Formerly abundant around the coasts and islets, the range of *Myosotidium hortensium* has been significantly reduced to scattered remnants by farming, competition from marram grass (*Ammophila arenaria*) and the depredations of feral animals, such as cattle, horses, sheep, possums, pigs, rats and weka who trample, uproot and browse plants. Possums, rodents, and weka are serious predators of flowers and fruits. Weed encroachment, especially by marram grass, has eliminated this species from most of its former dune habitat. Removing whole plants for private use in gardens is an ongoing problem for the more accessible populations. Coastal development destroyed the only known white-flowered wild plants, and remains a potential threat elsewhere.

ETYMOLOGY

myosotidium: Myosotis-like

WHERE TO BUY

Commonly available from most commercial and specialist native plant nurseries.

ATTRIBUTION

Fact Sheet prepared for NZPCN by P.J. de Lange 1 February 2008. Description based on de Lange et al. (2010).

REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

de Lange, P.J.; Heenan, P.B.; Norton, D.A.; Rolfe, J.R.; Sawyer, J.W.D. 2010: Threatened Plants of New Zealand. Canterbury University Press, Christchurch.

Garnock-Jones P.J. 2014: Evidence-based review of the taxonomic status of New Zealand's endemic seed plant genera, *New Zealand Journal of Botany*, DOI: [10.1080/0028825X.2014.902854](https://doi.org/10.1080/0028825X.2014.902854)

Heenan, P.B., Schönberger, I. 2009. Typification of *Myosotis hortensia* Decne., the basionym of *Myosotidium hortensium* (Decne.) Baill., and its synonym *Cynoglossum nobile* Hook.f. (Boraginaceae). *New Zealand Journal of Botany*, Vol. 47: 121–125

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<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/myosotidium-hortensia/> (Date website was queried)

MORE INFORMATION

<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/myosotidium-hortensia/>