Myosotis australis

BIOSTATUS
Native – Endemic taxon

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS
2023 | Not Assessed | Qualifiers: SO
Jump to previous conservation statuses

CATEGORY
Vascular

STRUCTURAL CLASS
Herbs - Dicotyledons other than Composites

FLOWER COLOURS
White, Yellow

DETAILED DESCRIPTION
Gracile, tufted, perennial herb. Rosette usually single, leaves spathulate or lamina elliptic, 20-60 × 4-12 mm, tip rounded and ± mucronate, petiole , more less equal to lamina-length, narrow but ill-defined; hairs on upper surface spreading, uniform, fine, crowded, often hooked, on undersurface sparser, shorter, retrorse. Lateral branches ascending or erect (not rooting from nodes), few to many, up to 300 mm long, internodes usually equal to or greater than leaves. Upper stem-leaves sessile, spathulate to oblong, mostly 10-15 mm long, tip subacute; hairs on upper surface silky, ± appressed, overlapping, on undersurface sparser, shorter, irregularly arranged. Cymes mostly ebracteate, except sometimes towards base, mostly simple and terminal, either on primary laterals or on secondary laterals arising from axils of stem-leaves; internodes between fruits greater than calyx; pedicels very short. Calyx c. 4 mm long, lobes cut for greater than half calyx length, narrow, subacute; hairs long and straight towards tips, shorter and hooked towards base, with very short sparse hairs overall. Corolla white or yellow, tube equal to or greater in length of calyx, widest at top, lobes rounded, concave; filaments very short, fixed below scales, anther-tips barely reaching scales; style more or less equal to tube length in flower. Nutlet 1.4-2.1 × 0.8-1.0 mm, ovate to ovate-elliptic, black.

SIMILAR TAXA
Even with the change in rank for Myosotis australis var. lytteltonensis (see de Lange et al. 2010), the remaining members of the Myosotis australis complex are in serious need ot revision. Collectively these entities, unified here as Myosotis australis sensu lato can be recognised by the calyx which is 3-6 mm long and deeply lobed, and clad with numerous hooked (uncinate) hairs, and by the anther-tips not projecting above the scales. That said distinct entities can be recognised of which the most common entity is the yellow-flowered plant illustrated on this fact sheet and often known as Myosotis “australis yellow”, other entities included within M. australis have white flowers, and include M. saxatilis Petrie and M. “australis small white”. There is good evidence that all of these warrant elevation to species rank. However, to do so would at this stage be premature until a full comparison with the type of M. australis (which is Australian) is undertaken along with the critical examination of the range of variation in Australian M. australis. Further, there are other small, white-flowered plants present in Central Otago that might be palced within M. australis, and these too require careful study.

Myosotis australis agg. (M. “australis yellow”), Rachel Range, Upper Awatere Valley. Photographer: Gillian M. Crowcroft, Date taken: 01/12/1994, Licence: All rights reserved.

Benmore Summit. Dec 1975. Photographer: Colin C. Ogle, Licence: CC BY-NC.

DISTRIBUTION
?Indigenous. North and South Islands.

HABITAT
Montane to alpine. Mostly grassland, cliffs and other open rocky and stony places

GENUS
Myosotis

FAMILY
Boraginaceae

AUTHORITY
Myosotis australis R.Br.

SYNONYMS
Myosotis australis var. conspicua Cheeseman, Myosotis saxatilis Petrie

ENDEMIC TAXON
Yes

ENDEMIC GENUS
No

ENDEMIC FAMILY
No

FLOWERING
October - March

FRUITING
December - May

PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE
Easily grown from fresh seed and in ideal conditions will freely self sow in gardens, However, along with most other indigenous Myosotis, members of the M. australis complex are prone to mildew and rust infections. They also dislike humid climates.

WHERE TO BUY
Not commercially available

ETYMOLOGY
myosotis: Mouse-eared
australis: Southern

NVS CODE
MYOAUS

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: 2024 | 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. 1961: Flora of New Zealand. Vol. I. Goverment Printer, Wellington.
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.

ATTRIBUTION

NZPCN FACT SHEET CITATION

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

MORE INFORMATION

https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/myosotis-australis/

PDF DATE

27 May 2026