

# Myosotis forsteri

## COMMON NAMES

Forster's forget-me-not

## BIOSTATUS

Native – Endemic taxon

## CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2023 | Not Threatened

[Jump to previous conservation statuses](#)

## CATEGORY

Vascular

## STRUCTURAL CLASS

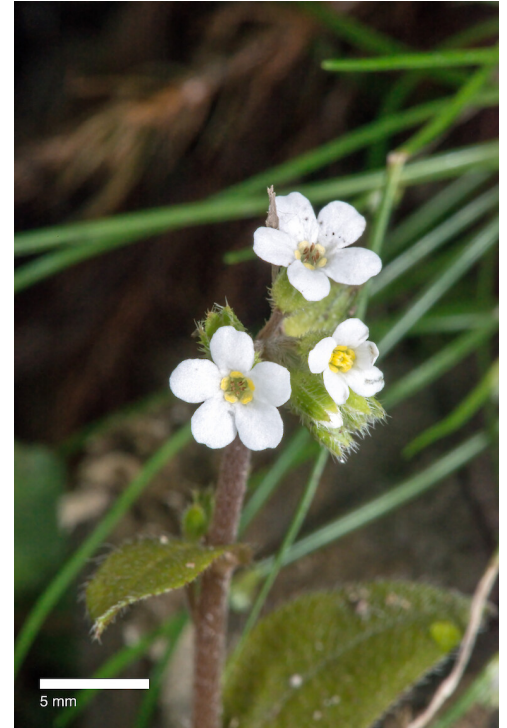
Herbs - Dicotyledons other than Composites

## FLOWER COLOURS

White

## DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Sparingly to heavily branched laxly tufted perennial herb. Rosette usually single sometimes up to 3 present, leaf-lamina broad-elliptic to orbicular, 15-60 × 10-45 mm, tip rounded, ± mucronate, petiole equal to or longer than lamina-length, narrow and rather well-defined; hairs short, stiff or ± flexuous, usually appressed, sparse and not overlapping, not retrorse on undersurface. Lateral branches few to many, basally lax otherwise ascending to erect, sometimes branched, 80-600 mm long, internodes usually equal to or longer than leaves. Stem-leaves few, lower ones spatulate, upper sessile and broad-ovate, c. 10-15 × 6-13 mm. long, tip rounded and mucronate; hairs short, usually appressed, sparse on both surfaces. Cymes ebracteate, except sometimes towards base, 6-10-flowered, mostly simple; internodes between fruits usually greater in length than calyx; pedicels up to 6 mm long, up to 10 to a stem in fruit. Calyx 2.5-5.0 mm long, lobes barely cut at half calyx length, rather broad, subacute; hairs sparse, mostly confined to margins and ribs, long and straight above, shorter and slightly hooked towards base. Corolla white, 2-6 mm diameter, tube 2-4 mm long, cylindrical but widest at mouth, lobes broadly rounded; filaments very short, fixed below scales, anthers c.0.5 mm long, partially exerted above scales; style < calyx in fruit, stigma capitate. Nutlet 1.2-1.8 × 0.9-1.1 mm, elliptic, ovate elliptic or broadly ovate-elliptic, black.



Dawson Falls, Mount Taranaki. Photographer: Jeremy R. Rolfe, Date taken: 13/02/2015, Licence: CC BY.



Distinctive abaxial leaf surface, Darran Mountains, Fiordland, 500 m asl. Photographer: Jesse Bythell, Date taken: 29/12/2014, Licence: CC BY-NC.

## SIMILAR TAXA

*Myosotis forsteri* is recognised by the combination of having ebracteate inflorescences borne on laxly ascending to erect branches; calyx-hairs showing a continuous range of sizes with many or all of the larger ones not hooked (uncinate), and by the absence of retrorse hairs on the undersides of the rosette-leaves. The leaf hairs of this species are characteristically short and sparse, the inflorescences long and laxly ascending to erect with the internodes between the fruits longer than the calyx length. These attributes encompass a wide range of diversity and there is little doubt that the current circumscription of *Myosotis forsteri* contains a number of additional units worthy of formal description (see taxonomic notes). *Myosotis forsteri* can be difficult to distinguish from the much rarer *M. petiolata* var. *pansa* (see description of that species) and especially *M. venosa* (which has anthers exerted above corolla scales and subtle hair differences). Indeed Colenso even named two species *M. polyantha* and *M. tenuifolia* which included elements of both *M. forsteri* and *M. venosa*! In the field *Myosotis forsteri* is probably best distinguished by the distinctly petiolate, dark green oval leaves with orange dotting on the paler (silvery) leaf undersides. In this species the rosettes are often solitary or if multiple - rather open and lax with the inflorescences typically lax near the base, then ascending to erect, rathered elongated and bearing widely spaced flowers held at a wide angle from the stem.

## DISTRIBUTION

Endemic. North and South Islands (from the Mangamuka Range southwards but scarce north of the Waikato)

## HABITAT

Forest and streamsides. Usually riparian but also found in forest around springs, seepages and on damp, shaded rock outcrops (especially limestone or a similar base-rich rock)

## GENUS

*Myosotis*

## FAMILY

Boraginaceae

## AUTHORITY

*Myosotis forsteri* Lehm.

## SYNONYMS

*Myosotis hamiltonii* Colenso; *Myosotis tenuifolia* Colenso pro parte; *Myosotis polyantha* Colenso pro parte

## TAXONOMIC NOTES

*Myosotis forsteri* is a species complex in urgent need to revision. There are a wide range of distinct, true-breeding races spanning the country which are currently placed within a broad taxonomic concept of this species. Many of them probably merit recognition at species rank.

## ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes

## ENDEMIC GENUS

No

## ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

## FLOWERING

October - April

## FRUITING

November - May

## PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

Easily grown and tolerant of a wide range of conditions (except full sun and drying out). It grows well in a moist but free draining soil, and does best in semi-shade. Fresh seed germinates readily, and plants once established, freely set seed, producing numerous seedlings. However, in humid climates plants are prone to powdery mildew infections, and like many other indigenous forget-me-nots plants are prone rust infections, which make the leaves swollen and unsightly.

## ETYMOLOGY

**myosotis:** Mouse-eared

## NVS CODE

MYOFOR

## PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2017 | Not Threatened

2012 | Not Threatened

2009 | Not Threatened

2004 | Not Threatened

[Jump to current conservation status](#)

## REGIONAL CONSERVATION STATUSES

Auckland: 2025 | Regionally Extirpated 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.

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

## ATTRIBUTION

Fact Sheet prepared for NZPCN by P.J. de Lange 1 February 2008. Description based on Allan (1961).

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## MORE INFORMATION

<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/myosotis-forsteri/>

## PDF DATE

27 May 2026