

# Ourisia modesta

## COMMON NAME

creeping foxglove

## SYNONYMS

None

## FAMILY

Plantaginaceae

## AUTHORITY

*Ourisia modesta* Diels

## FLORA CATEGORY

Vascular – Native

## ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes

## ENDEMIC GENUS

No

## ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

## STRUCTURAL CLASS

Herbs - Dicotyledons other than Composites

## NVS CODE

OURMOD

## CHROMOSOME NUMBER

2n = 48

## CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2017 | Threatened – Nationally Critical | Qualifiers: DP, PD, Sp

## PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2012 | Threatened – Nationally Critical | Qualifiers: Sp

2009 | Threatened – Nationally Critical | Qualifiers: Sp

2004 | Gradual Decline

## DISTRIBUTION

Endemic to the North, South and Stewart Islands. In the North Island known only from one site in the North West Ruahine Ranges, where it has not been seen recently.

## HABITAT

Beech forest alongside rivers, usually in seepages or on poorly drained terraces amongst leaf litter or in muddy hollows, sometimes associated with stream and river banks, or in flushes within subalpine scrub.

## WETLAND PLANT INDICATOR STATUS RATING

FACW: Facultative Wetland

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



Close up of plant at Goulund Downs.  
Photographer: Simon Walls, Licence: CC BY-NC.



Taken of cultivated plants. Photographer: Heidi Meudt, Licence: All rights reserved.

## DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Perennial, creeping herb up to 70 mm tall, with ascending inflorescences and repent leaves; stems 0.6–1.3 mm thick; internodes 6–22 mm long, clearly separate, glabrous or eglandular hairy. Leaves opposite; petiole 4.5–33.7 × 0.4–1.2 mm, mostly glabrous, leaf lamina 4.0–15.0 × 4.6–12.3 mm, broadly ovate, circular, or elliptic, apex rounded, base truncate or weakly cordate, sometimes slightly cuneate, margin subentire or irregularly notched, upper surface glabrous, finely and densely punctate, undersides glabrous, densely punctate. Inflorescence 25–90 mm long, racemose, ascending, bracteates, with 1–2-flowering nodes per inflorescence, 2 bracts and 1 flower per node, and c. 1–2 flowers per raceme; peduncle 0.6–1.1 mm wide, eglandular hairy. Floral bracts 3.7–9.3 × 3.9–9.3 mm, decreasing in size toward inflorescence apex, petiolate to subsessile, broadly ovate to ovate, rarely elliptic to circular, margin subentire or irregularly notched, glabrous or sparsely eglandular hairy on margins and petiole, otherwise upper surface densely punctate. Flowers 5.7–8.9 × 2.5–7.2 mm, white. Pedicel 2.3–15.8 mm long, sparsely eglandular hairy. Calyx 3.7–8.2 × 2.7–6.7 mm, irregular, glabrous, densely punctate, rarely sparsely eglandular hairy. Corolla 6.6–9.0 × 7.7–9.0 mm, bilabiate, tubular-funnelform, glabrous or rarely externally furnished with sparse, short, eglandular hairs; tube 3.3–6.3 × 2.8–3.8 mm at apex; corolla lobes 1.7–3.5 × 0.9–2.0 mm, slightly spreading, slightly obcordate, emarginated or apical margin undulate. Stamens 4, two long stamens 4.5–5.3 mm, two short stamens 2.6–4.6 mm, anthers reniform to horse-shoe-shaped, staminode 0.3–0.4 mm long or absent. Style 2.2–3.9 × 0.2–0.5 mm, capitate or emarginated; ovary 1.5–2.3 × 1.3–1.7 mm. Capsules 4.4–5.2 × 4.2–6.0 mm, glabrous, fruiting pedicels 17.0–31.3 mm long. Seeds 0.7–0.8 × 0.5–0.7 mm.

## SIMILAR TAXA

Easily confused with sterile specimens of *Viola filicaulis* from which it is most easily identified by having opposite, exstipulate rather than alternate stipulate leaves.

## FLOWERING

December - January

## FLOWER COLOURS

White

## FRUITING

January - February

## PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

Difficult and should not be removed from the wild.

## THREATS

The exact extent of decline or the degree of threat this small herb actually faces is unclear. It would appear to have recently gone extinct in its only known North Island location, perhaps through natural succession to taller plants. In the South Island some populations have been lost as a result of weeds spreading into its habitat. However, as the species is very cryptic it is easily overlooked so it is possible that some of those populations believed to have gone are still there, while the exact distribution of the species remains unclear.

## ETYMOLOGY

**ourisia:** After Ouris, governor of the Falkland Islands

**modesta:** Mild or modest

## WHERE TO BUY

Not commercially available.

## ATTRIBUTION

Fact Sheet Prepared for NZPCN by: P.J. de Lange 28 October 2009. Description based on Meudt (2006) - see also 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, Christchurch, Canterbury University Press. 471pp

Meudt, H.M. 2006: Monograph of *Ourisia* (Plantaginaceae). *Systematic Botany Monographs* 37. 188pp.

### **NZPCN FACT SHEET CITATION**

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

### **MORE INFORMATION**

<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/ourisia-modesta/>