

Ourisia spathulata

COMMON NAMES

mountain foxglove

BIOSTATUS

Native – Endemic taxon

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2023 | At Risk – Naturally Uncommon | Qualifiers: RR

[Jump to previous conservation statuses](#)

CATEGORY

Vascular

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Herbs - Dicotyledons other than Composites

FLOWER COLOURS

White

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Perennial herbs 66-187 mm tall, with erect inflorescences and repent leaves; stems 1.8-5.6 mm diameter, internodes 2.2-6.4 mm long, more or less glabrous. Leaves subrosulate to tightly packed along creeping stems; petiole 3.8-21.8 x 2.1-8.6 mm, glandular (rarely eglandular) pilose, mainly on margins; lamina 7.6-29.4 x 7.0-20.3 mm; obovate to very broadly obovate, apex rounded, base cuneate, tapering to wide petiole, margin evenly crenate, upper surface velutinous, hairs densely glandular/eglandular, undersides prominently veined, less hairy, hairs mostly glandular. Inflorescence, racemose, 1-8-flowered, 74-190 mm long, erect, bracteate, with 1-4 flowering nodes, 2 bracts and 1-2- flowers per node; peduncle 0.7-1.8 mm diameter, pilose, densely glandular/eglandular hairy. Floral bracts up to 8.7-14.5 x 3.1-6.1 mm, sessile, parallel to peduncle, oblanceolate to narrowly obovate, margin with irregular, obscure notches near apex, glandular/eglandular pilose. Flowers 13.1-23.3 x 8.8-19.8 mm; pedicel 8.0-36.0 mm long, pilose, hairs mostly glandular. Calyx 6.4-9.1 x 5.1-9.4 mm, irregular, externally and on margins, eglandular/glandular pilose, internally glabrous, anterior calyx lobes 6.8-9.2 x 2.0-3.2 mm, posterior calyx lobes 1.1-4.0 x 1.5-3.3 mm, 3 posterior lobes divided 1/3-2/3 of calyx length, 2 anterior lobes divided to near base, mostly lanceolate, or narrowly ovate, elliptic or oblanceolate, apex rounded or subacute, prominently 3-veined below. Corolla 18.6-23.8 x 18.4-22.5 mm when flattened, bilabiate, tubular-funnelform, straight or curved, white externally glabrous; tube 7.5-13.6 x 3.1-5.6 mm at apex, 1.9-3.4 mm wide at base, not constricted near base, yellow inside, glabrous; anterior corolla lobes 5.5-11.1 x 3.6-7.6 at widest point, 1.3-4.2 mm wide at base, posterior corolla lobes 4.3-8.9 x 2.9-7.7 mm wide at widest point, 1.5-3.4 mm wide at base, spreading, obovate or slightly obcordate. Stamens 4, didynamous; comprising two long stamens 6.1-7.0 mm long, included, and two short stamens 5.1-6.8 mm long, included; anthers 0.8-1.0 x 0.9-1.4 mm, reniform to horseshoe-shaped; staminode c.0.3-0.7 mm long, inserted c.0.1-0.4 mm above base of corolla. Style 4.2-5.3 mm long, base straight or slightly bent, included or slightly exerted; stigma 0.3-0.5 mm diameter, emarginate to subcapitate; ovary 3.2-3.8 x 1.4-2.7 mm, glabrous. Capsules, fruits and Seeds not yet described.



Mt Cerberus. Photographer: Heidi Meudt, Licence: All rights reserved.



Ourisia spathulata. Photographer: Heidi Meudt, Licence: All rights reserved.

SIMILAR TAXA

Distinguished by the mixtures of glandular/eglandular hairs on most parts; internally glabrous corolla tube; zygomorphic corolla and calyx; velvety, spathulate leaves with wide flat petioles; and by the leaves opposite along stems or subrosulate. Closest to *O. simpsonii* (L.B.Moore) Arroyo and *O. sessiliflora* Hook.f.

DISTRIBUTION

Endemic. South Island where confined to northern Southland (Thomson, Livingstone and Eyre Range as well as East Dome).

HABITAT

Low to high alpine (980-1430 m a.s.l.) in herbfields, tussock grasslands or scrubland. Usually in south-facing sites on rocky outcrops, boulders, and cliffs. Often in dry habitats.

THREATS

Not Threatened. However a very localised species of limited geographic range - hence its current listing

GENUS

Ourisia

FAMILY

Plantaginaceae

AUTHORITY

Ourisia spathulata Arroyo

SYNONYMS

None (first described 1984)

ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes

ENDEMIC GENUS

No

ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

FLOWERING

November - January

FRUITING

January - March

PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

Difficult - should not be removed from the wild

WHERE TO BUY

Not commercially available

ETYMOLOGY

ourisia: After Ouris, governor of the Falkland Islands

spathulata: Shaped like a flattened spoon (leaves)

NVS CODE

OURSPA

CHROMOSOME NUMBER

2 n= 48

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2017 | At Risk – Naturally Uncommon | Qualifiers: RR
2012 | At Risk – Naturally Uncommon | Qualifiers: RR, Sp
2009 | At Risk – Naturally Uncommon | Qualifiers: DP
2004 | Range Restricted
[Jump to current conservation status](#)

REGIONAL CONSERVATION STATUSES

Otago: 2025 | Regionally At Risk – Regionally Naturally Uncommon | Qualifiers: DPS, DPT, Sp 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

Meudt, H.M. 2006: Monograph of *Ourisia* (Plantaginaceae), Systematic Botany Monographs 77. 188pp.

ATTRIBUTION

Description based on Meudt (2006).

MORE INFORMATION

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

PDF DATE

25 May 2026