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 exserted; 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 confiend 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
Current regional threat status assessments prepared according to Crisp et al. (2025) are displayed when available. The 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

08 July 2026