

Ranunculus grahamii

COMMON NAME

Graham's buttercup

SYNONYMS

None Known

FAMILY

Ranunculaceae

AUTHORITY

Ranunculus grahamii Petrie

FLORA CATEGORY

Vascular – Native

ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes

ENDEMIC GENUS

No

ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Herbs - Dicotyledons other than Composites

NVS CODE

RANGRH

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2012 | At Risk – Naturally Uncommon | Qualifiers: CD, RR

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2009 | At Risk – Naturally Uncommon

2004 | Range Restricted

DISTRIBUTION

Endemic. South Island, Mt Cook National Park within a very small area running from Malte Brun Range in the east to the main divide in the west as far south as Mt Nazomi.

HABITAT

A high alpine (2300 - 2800 m a.s.l.) species of rock crevices, ledges, and cliff faces within the permanent snow line. It has a very short growing season during mid to late summer.

FEATURES

Short, stout, erect, summer-green rosette-forming plant 70-120 mm tall. Rhizome stout, bearing numerous stringy rootlets. Leaves thick, fleshy, glaucous; radical leaves 3-4 or more; petioles 50-80 mm long with broad sheathing base, margins covered in white, sericeous hairs; blade 35-50 mm diam., glaucous, reniform, divided almost to base into 3 broadly cuneate segments, these again deeply lobed, succulent, coriaceous, glabrescent, margins with sparse long sericeous hairs. Flowering scape 1-3-flowered, 100-150 mm long, > leaves; bracts 1-2, similar to leaves but smaller and less divided. Flowers 20-30 mm diam.; sepals 5, broadly oblong, obtuse, external faces sericeous; petals golden yellow, 8-16, narrow-obovate, obtuse, nectaries near base, single or multiple; stamens numerous, in 2 or more series; receptacle broadly oblong or nearly orbicular. Achenes glabrous or sparsely hairy on body toward base. Body turgid, ovoid, 2.5-3.0(-3.5) mm long; surface dull, pale brown; beak 2.5-3.0 mm long, curved.



Close up of flowers. Photographer: David Norton

SIMILAR TAXA

Somewhat similar to *R. haastii* from which it differs by its restriction to high altitude rock crevices, ledges and cliff faces within the permanent snow line, rather than mobile scree, less divided leaves (leaves divided to 3/4 rather all the way to the base), and less obviously flattened, sometimes partially winged achene beak.

FLOWERING

February - March

FLOWER COLOURS

Yellow

FRUITING

March - May

PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

Difficult. Should not be removed from the wild.

THREATS

A very localised endemic of high alpine cliff and ledge habitats, within the permanent snow line. Because of its habitat and altitudinal range it is not often seen except by rock climbers, so exact numbers of plants in the wild is unclear. It is believed to be at some risk from Thar and Chamois. Provided numbers of these browsing animals are kept low it is not believed to be seriously threatened.

ETYMOLOGY

ranunculus: From the Latin 'rana' frog, meaning little frog and probably refers to the plants typical marshy habit where frogs abound

WHERE TO BUY

Not commercially available

ATTRIBUTION

Fact Sheet prepared by P.J. de Lange (12 February 2007). Description based on Fisher (1965).

REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

Fisher, F.J.F. 1965: The alpine *Ranunculi* of New Zealand. *Bulletin, New Zealand Department of Scientific and Industrial Research* 165: 1-192.

NZPCN FACT SHEET CITATION

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MORE INFORMATION

<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/ranunculus-grahamii/>