

# Scutellaria novae-zelandiae

## COMMON NAMES

New Zealand skullcap, shovel mint

## BIOSTATUS

Native – Endemic taxon

## CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2023 | Threatened – Nationally Endangered | Qualifiers: Sp, CD, RR

[Jump to previous conservation statuses](#)

## CATEGORY

Vascular

## STRUCTURAL CLASS

Herbs - Dicotyledons other than Composites

## FLOWER COLOURS

White

## DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Small, creeping, perennial herb forming diffuse patches on forest floor. All parts puberulent to glabrate. Main stems woody at base, creeping, square in cross-section, dark purple-red, maroon to almost black. Branches sparse to many, spreading, sub-erect to erect. Leaves in distant pairs. Petioles 2–20 mm long, slender, dark purple to purple-black. Lamina 3–13 x 2–16 mm, dark green above, pink to purple underneath, ovate, suborbicular to reniform, membranous, entire or 3–5-toothed or lobed, apex obtuse to rounded, base rounded to subcordate or cordate; lamina surface usually glabrate with hairs restricted to veins on leaf undersides, sometimes entirely glabrous; undersides finely dotted with small spherical glands. Flowers single in leaf axils, white. Pedicels 1–3 mm long, < petioles. Bracts subulate. Calyx 2.5–3.5 mm long, puberulent; scale enlarging until at least 1.5 mm long at anthesis. Corolla 6–11 mm long to apex of lower lip, hairy; tube 4–6 mm long, straight, broadening toward apex; lower lip > upper lip, middle lobe broad, rounded, upper lip deeply lobed and rounded. Nutlets 1–1.3 mm long, dark brown, surface granular.

## SIMILAR TAXA

A distinctive species. The white helmet-shaped flowers and small shovel-shaped seeds readily distinguish it from all other indigenous herbaceous plants. It could be confused with the naturalised *S. minor* Hudson, but that species has linear to lanceolate, entire mid to upper stem leaves (rather than broad-ovate, suborbicular to reniform, lobed to toothed leaves), and pink rather than white flowers.

## DISTRIBUTION

Northern South Island, particularly in the west.

## HABITAT

Free draining, alluvial matai (*Prumnopitys taxifolia* (Sol. ex D. Don) de Laub.), black beech (*Nothofagus solandri* (Hook. f. Oerst.), and totara (*Podocarpus totara* (G. Benn.) ex D. Don var. *totara*) forest.

## THREATS

Threatened mainly from weeds, which overshadow plants, smother and outcompete them. Some populations have been browsed by goats and cattle.

## GENUS

Scutellaria



In cultivation. Photographer: John Barkla, Licence: CC BY.



Close up. Photographer: Bill Malcolm, Licence: All rights reserved.

## FAMILY

Lamiaceae

## AUTHORITY

Scutellaria novae-zelandiae Hook.f.

## SYNONYMS

Scutellaria humilis Hook.f. non R.Br.

## ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes

## ENDEMIC GENUS

No

## ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

## FLOWERING

August to March (but sporadic flowering may occur throughout the year)

## FRUITING

August to March (but sporadic fruiting may occur throughout the year)

## PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

Easily grown from cuttings, divisions of whole plants and seed. An excellent ground cover for semi-shaded free-draining to permanently damp, fertile soils.

## ETYMOLOGY

**novae-zelandiae:** Of New Zealand

## CHROMOSOME NUMBER

2n = 60

## PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2017 | Threatened – Nationally Critical | Qualifiers: DP, RR

2012 | Threatened – Nationally Critical | Qualifiers: EF, RR

2009 | Threatened – Nationally Critical | Qualifiers: EF, RR

2004 | Threatened – Nationally Vulnerable

[Jump to current conservation status](#)

## 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. 471 pp.

Webb, C.J.; Sykes, W.R.; Garnock-Jones, P.J. 1988: *Flora of New Zealand. Vol. IV. Naturalised Pteridophytes, Gymnosperms, Dicotyledons*. Christchurch, New Zealand, Botany Division, D.S.I.R.

## ATTRIBUTION

Fact sheet prepared for NZPCN by P.J. de Lange 1 November 2009. Description adapted from Webb et al. (1988) and de Lange et al. (2010).

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## NZPCN FACT SHEET CITATION

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<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/scutellaria-novae-zelandiae/> (Date website was queried)

## MORE INFORMATION

<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/scutellaria-novae-zelandiae/>

