

Shawia adenocarpa

COMMON NAMES

Canterbury Plains tree daisy

BIOSTATUS

Native – Endemic taxon

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2023 | Threatened – Nationally Critical | Qualifiers: CD, RF

[Jump to previous conservation statuses](#)

CATEGORY

Vascular

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Trees & Shrubs - Dicotyledons

SIMPLIFIED DESCRIPTION

Rare shrub to 1.5m tall with many upright thin twigs arising from trailing branches and bearing clusters of oval dark green leaves that are bright white on the underside and inhabiting the Canterbury Plains. Flowers small, outer surface hairy (lens needed). Fruit dry, with mostly blob-tipped hairs (lens needed).

FLOWER COLOURS

White

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Openly branched, trailing deciduous to semi-deciduous shrub 1.2–1.5 m tall, up to 1.5 m diameter. Branches originating from near or below ground level, widely spreading usually spreading to decumbent, sometimes upright; sometimes rhizomatous. Leaves 3–14 × 2–4 mm, narrowly obovate to broadly obovate or oval, opposite or in fascicles on brachyblasts, upper surfaces light green, grey–green to brown–green with a silvery sheen, undersides uniformly silvery white, base attenuate to cuneate, apex obtuse with a small red to red-brown apiculus. Capitula 1–6 per brachyblast. Pedicels 1.2–4.0 mm long, densely covered with appressed hairs. Involucral bracts 18–22, 4–5-seriate, outer surfaces hairy. Florets 8–12, white. Achenes 2.0–2.5 mm long, light brown, sparsely to moderately covered in sessile glandular hairs.

SIMILAR TAXA

Perhaps most closely allied to *Shawia odorata*, from which it can be distinguished by its smaller size.

DISTRIBUTION

Endemic. South Island, Canterbury Plains. Known from the vicinity of Christchurch (West Melton), Rakaia Island, and Te Pirita.

HABITAT

A lowland species of recently deposited alluvial gravels and sands.

THREATS

Severely threatened by browsing animals, habitat loss/modification, and weed invasion. Fenced plants are vulnerable to overtopping by pasture grasses.

GENUS

Shawia

FAMILY

Asteraceae



West Melton, Canterbury. Photographer: Melissa Hutchison, Date taken: 03/07/2020, Licence: CC BY-NC.



Waimaki Floodplain. Typical habitat. Photographer: Peter B. Heenan, Licence: CC BY-NC.

AUTHORITY

Shawia adenocarpa (Heenan et Molloy) Saldivia & Nicol

SYNONYMS

None

TAXONOMIC NOTES

Previously recorded as *Olearia* aff. *odorata* (CHR 386084; Canterbury Plains) in de Lange *et al.* 2004; Threatened and uncommon plants of New Zealand. *New Zealand Journal of Botany* 42: 45-76.

ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes

ENDEMIC GENUS

No

ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

FLOWERING

January - February

FRUITING

February - March

PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

Easily grown from semi hardwood and hardwood cuttings and fresh seed.

PLANT OF THE MONTH

This plant has been featured as a Plant of the Month – see [Trilepidea: NZPCN newsletter for January 2005](#) for the full story.

ETYMOLOGY

shawia: After Thomas Shaw (1694-1751), English scholar and traveller.

CHROMOSOME NUMBER

2n = 108

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2017 | Threatened – Nationally Critical | Qualifiers: CD, RF

2012 | Threatened – Nationally Critical | Qualifiers: CD, De, RF

2009 | Threatened – Nationally Critical | Qualifiers: CD, De, RF

2004 | Threatened – Nationally Critical

[Jump to current conservation status](#)

REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

de Lange, P.J.; Heenan, P.B.; Norton, D.A.; Rolfe, J.R. and Sawyer, J.W.D. 2010: *Threatened Plants of New Zealand*. Canterbury University Press, Christchurch.

Heenan, P.B. and Molloy, B.P.J. 2004: Taxonomy, ecology and conservation of *Olearia adenocarpa* (Asteraceae), a new species from braided riverbeds in Canterbury, New Zealand. *New Zealand Journal of Botany* 42(1): 21-36.

Saldivia, P.; Nicol, D.A. 2025: Reinstatement, broader circumscription, and infrageneric classification of *Shawia* (Astereae, Celmisiinae), a large woody genus endemic to Australasia. *Phytoneuron* 49: 1-43.

ATTRIBUTION

Fact Sheet prepared for the NZPCN by P.J. de Lange (14 April 2006). Description by P.B Heenan (adapted from Heenan & Molloy (2004) and subsequently published in de Lange *et al.* (2010).

NZPCN FACT SHEET CITATION

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

MORE INFORMATION

<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/shawia-adenocarpa/>

PDF DATE

25 May 2026