

Shawia hectorii

COMMON NAMES

deciduous tree daisy, Hector's tree daisy

BIOSTATUS

Native – Endemic taxon

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2023 | Threatened – Nationally Endangered | Qualifiers: CD, CR, DPT, PD, PF, RF

[Jump to previous conservation statuses](#)

CATEGORY

Vascular

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Trees & Shrubs - Dicotyledons

SIMPLIFIED DESCRIPTION

Rare small-leaved shrub with wide-angled grooved reddish stems bearing clusters of thin grey-green leaves inhabiting river valleys of the eastern South Island. Leaves 20-50mm long by 5-20 mm wide. Flowers small, yellowish, on drooping 15 mm long stalks, in small groups at base of leaves. Seeds fuzzy.

FLOWER COLOURS

Yellow

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Deciduous shrub or small tree up to 10 m tall. Trunk up to 1 m diam., bark thick, somewhat corky, grey, persistent, deeply marked with longitudinal furrows. Branches one to many, often spreading. Branchlets slender, grooved, glabrescent; bark red, red-brown to bronze-red. Adult leaves 2-4 on short shoots or widely spaced along fast growing branchlets; petioles 5 mm, slender; leaf lamina 20-50 x 5-20 mm, grey-green to green above, silvery-grey beneath, narrow-oblong, oblong-ovate to broadly-ovate, undersides clad in silvery tomentum, upper surface glabrescent; lamina margins flat and entire. Capitula in fascicles of 2-6, 5 x 5 mm; pedicels slender, silky hairy, 15 mm long. Florets 20-25, pale yellow, ray-florets 10-15, narrow, rather short, disc florets 10-15. Phyllaries in 2 series, weakly imbricate, oblong, obtuse, exposed surface pilose hairy. Achenes 1-2 mm, narrow-obovate. Pappus-hairs 3-5 mm long.

SIMILAR TAXA

Shawia odorata and *S. fragrantissima* are superficially similar to *S. hectorii*. From those species *S. hectorii* can be distinguished by the leaves which are opposite and by its straight branchlets. *Shawia fragrantissima* has alternate leaves and zigzag twig stems, while *S. odorata* has narrower, smaller leaves lacking leaf stalks, and is usually a shrub, rarely a small tree. The North Island *S. gardneri*, though similar differs by the broadly deltoid, truncate, rather than oblanceolate juvenile leaves, by the smaller, distinctly less hairy adult leaves, white rather than yellow flowers, and narrowly lanceolate, toothed, finely hairy phyllaries (bracts surrounding the flowers). The phyllary hairs are long and wavy.

DISTRIBUTION

Endemic. Eastern South Island.

HABITAT

Lowland to subalpine often at the base of steep hills on colluvium, or on alluvium in situations affected by flooding, debris avalanching, water-logging, drought and/or frost.



Olearia hectorii, at Round Hill. Photographer: John Barkla, Licence: CC BY.



Olearia hectorii. Photographer: John Barkla, Licence: CC BY.

THREATS

This species is seriously threatened by recruitment failure. The seed of this species requires open sites to germinate in, and in most places such sites are scarce due to the presence of introduced grasses and herbs. Very few *Shawia hectorii* populations occur on protected land, and many are now dominated by old senescent trees. This species is also susceptible to browsing animals, and because of the dynamic habitats it occupies floods and slips once so critical for this species regeneration is now a serious threat. Isolated plants produce little viable seed.

GENUS

Shawia

FAMILY

Asteraceae

AUTHORITY

Shawia hectorii (Petrie) Saldivia & Nicol

SYNONYMS

Olearia hectorii Hook.f.

ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes

ENDEMIC GENUS

No

ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

FLOWERING

October - December

FRUITING

December - February

PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

Can be grown from fresh seed and semi-hardwood cuttings. The strike rate of these can be variable, and best results are obtained from cuttings taken after leaf fall in autumn, and kept in a cold frame over winter.

ORTHOGRAPHY NOTE

Published as *hectori* but *hectorii* is correct under the ICBN (International Code of Botanical Nomenclature).

EXTRA INFORMATION

[Olearia hectori](#) - watch the TVNZ - Meet the Locals (DOC)

PLANT OF THE MONTH

This plant has been featured as a Plant of the Month – see [Trilepidea: NZPCN newsletter for June 2022](#) for the full story.

ETYMOLOGY

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

hectorii: Named after Sir James Hector, 19th century New Zealand geologist and botanist who was originally from Scotland

NVS CODE

OLEHEC

CHROMOSOME NUMBER

2n = 108

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2017 | Threatened – Nationally Endangered | Qualifiers: CD, De, RF

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

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

2004 | Threatened – Nationally Vulnerable

Jump to current conservation status

REGIONAL CONSERVATION STATUSES

Otago: 2025 | Regionally Threatened – Regionally Endangered | Qualifiers: CD, NStr, RF, TL 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

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

Heads, M. 1998. Biodiversity in the New Zealand divaricating tree daisies: *Olearia* sect. nov. (Compositae). *Botanical Journal of the Linnean Society* 127(3): 239-285.

Hooker, J.D. 1864. *Handbook of the New Zealand Flora: a systematic description of the native plants of New Zealand and the Chatham, Kermadec's, Lord Auckland's, Campbell's and Macquarie's Islands*. Part I ed. London, Reeve. 392 pp.

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 Heads (1998) and subsequently published in de Lange et al. (2010).

NZPCN FACT SHEET CITATION

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MORE INFORMATION

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

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