

# Tetrachondra hamiltonii

## BIOSTATUS

Native – Endemic taxon

## CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2023 | Threatened – Nationally Vulnerable | Qualifiers: Sp, DPR, DPT

[Jump to previous conservation statuses](#)

## CATEGORY

Vascular

## STRUCTURAL CLASS

Herbs - Dicotyledons other than Composites

## FLOWER COLOURS

Green, White

## DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Creeping perennial herb rooting at nodes forming diffuse to dense turf-like patches. **Stems** fleshy, distinctly angled, square in cross-section, dark striped. **Leaves** opposite, 2 × 2 mm, broadly ovate to obovate-oblong, bright green or mottled with red, fleshy, sparsely covered with indistinct circular oil glands, glabrescent (leaf margins often faintly ciliolate), shortly petiolate to sessile, bases decurrent with stem. **Flowers** soliatry, off-white to greenish-white. **Calyx lobes** minute, ovate-triangular. **Corolla lobes** 4, obovate-oblong, pubescent. **Stamens and styles** 4. **Fruit** 4 brown setulose nutlets, broadly elliptic or obovate, (1)–1.1–1.4–(1.5) mm.

## SIMILAR TAXA

Without fruits this diminutive creeping herb could be easily confused with a diverse range of other unrelated turf-forming herbs, e.g., *Nertera* spp., *Crassula* spp., *Galium* spp. However, the distinctive 4-fruited setulose nutlets immediately distinguish it from these and other potential look-alikes.

## DISTRIBUTION

Endemic. New Zealand: North Island (NW corner of the Ruahine Ranges), South Island (localised but widespread, with the main centre of distribution in Otago, western Southland, Fiordland), Stewart Island/Rakiura.

## HABITAT

A species of open, compact turf communities such as those developed along lake and tarn margins, flushes and seepages. Occasionally found in suitably open sites within forest.

## THREATS

A naturally uncommon species of open damp turf, seepages, and the marginal turf communities of lakes and tarns. Sometimes in open scrub or damp grassland. Indications are that in parts of its range it is declining, possibly as a consequence of taller, faster growing weeds spreading into the habitats it requires.

## GENUS

Tetrachondra

## FAMILY

Tetrachondraceae

## AUTHORITY

*Tetrachondra hamiltonii* Petrie ex Oliv.



*Tetrachondra hamiltonii*. Photographer: John Barkla, Licence: CC BY.



Catlins. Photographer: John Barkla, Licence: CC BY.

## SYNONYMS

*Tillaea hamiltonii* Kirk nom. nud.

## ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes

## ENDEMIC GENUS

No

## ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

## FLOWERING

Flowers may be found throughout the year

## FRUITING

Fruits may be found throughout the year.

## PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

Easily grown from the division of whole plants.

## WETLAND PLANT INDICATOR STATUS RATING

FACW: Facultative Wetland

Usually is a hydrophyte but occasionally found in uplands (non-wetlands).

## CULTIVATION

Not commercially available but plants are held by several Botanic Gardens and specialist growers. It is very easily grown but is not particularly attractive.

## ETYMOLOGY

**hamiltonii**: Named after W. S. Hamilton (of Southland)

## NVS CODE

TETHAM

## CHROMOSOME NUMBER

$2n = 72$

## PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2017 | Threatened – Nationally Vulnerable | Qualifiers: DP, Sp

2012 | Data Deficient | Qualifiers: Sp

2009 | At Risk – Declining | Qualifiers: DP, Sp

2004 | Serious Decline

[Jump to current conservation status](#)

## REGIONAL CONSERVATION STATUSES

Otago: 2025 | Regionally Threatened – Regionally Endangered | Qualifiers: DPT, NStr, PD, RR 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

Allan HH. 1961. Flora of New Zealand, Volume I. Indigenous Tracheophyta: Psilopsida, Lycopsidea, Filicopsida, Gymnospermae, Dicotyledones. Government Printer, Wellington, NZ. 1085 p.

## ATTRIBUTION

Fact Sheet prepared for NZPCN by P.J. de Lange 1 August 2003. Description based on Allan (1961).

Some of this factsheet information is derived from [Flora of New Zealand Online](#) and is used under a [Creative Commons Attribution 3.0 New Zealand](#) licence.

### **NZPCN FACT SHEET CITATION**

Please cite as: de Lange, P.J. (Year at time of access): *Tetrachondra hamiltonii* Fact Sheet (content continuously updated). New Zealand Plant Conservation Network.

<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/tetrachondra-hamiltonii/> (Date website was queried)

### **MORE INFORMATION**

<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/tetrachondra-hamiltonii/>

### **PDF DATE**

25 May 2026