

Wahlenbergia albomarginata subsp. decora

COMMON NAMES

New Zealand harebell, harebell

BIOSTATUS

Native – Endemic taxon

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2023 | Not Threatened

[Jump to previous conservation statuses](#)

CATEGORY

Vascular

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Herbs - Dicotyledons other than Composites

FLOWER COLOURS

Blue, Violet/Purple

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Perennial herb with stout taproot, and short crowded tufts of rosulate leaves, radical leaves sparse, these sometimes alternate on elongated stems (shade form). Leaves dark green, yellow-green to red green (not drying glaucous), more or less petiolate, dentate to serrate, lamina 10 × 2 to 40 × 10 mm, obovate to oblanceolate, marginal teeth conspicuous, gradually narrowed to petiole as long as the lamina or longer. Flowers fragrant, insect-pollinated, borne on short, slender scapes 30–100 mm long; narrowly campanulate-rotate, corolla pale flax blue to pale blue-violet, often with white zoning and deeper coloured veins, or all white, 15–20 mm diameter, 10–15 mm long, corolla tube 4 × 3 to 10 × 6 mm, lobes 6 × 3 to 12 × 5 mm; style equal in length to corolla tube, lobes 2 or 3. Calyx lobes less than ¼ corolla length; capsule domed cylindric, 6–8 × 4 mm. Seeds 0.5 mm long, ellipsoid, smooth, glossy brown when mature.

SIMILAR TAXA

Similar to subsp. *laxa* (G.Simpson) J.A.Petterson, from which it differs mostly by its restriction to high alpine habitats; development of a strong taproot; development of short crowded rosettes in scree habitats; slender, short (30–100 mm long) scapes; fragrant flowers that are 15–20 mm diameter and 10–15 mm long. The distinctions between subsp. *decora* and subsp. *albomarginata*, subsp. *laxa* and subsp. *flexilis* (Petrie) J.A.Petterson, appear trivial and overlapping. The taxonomic status of all these subspecies (except perhaps subsp. *olivina* J.A.Petterson) seems questionable, and would repay further critical study.

DISTRIBUTION

Endemic. New Zealand: South Island (Nelson Lakes National Park; possibly also North-west Nelson and Fiordland)

HABITAT

Alpine. Inhabiting scree margins and rock crevices

GENUS

Wahlenbergia

FAMILY

Campanulaceae

AUTHORITY

Wahlenbergia albomarginata subsp. *decora* J.A.Petterson



Routeburn Track, Fiordland. Photographer: John Sawyer, Licence: CC BY-NC.

SYNONYMS

None (described in 1997)

ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes

ENDEMIC GENUS

No

ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

FLOWERING

November – April

FRUITING

December - April

PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

Easily grown from tip cuttings and the division of whole plants. Fresh seed germinates readily. Being insect-pollinated and having an indigenous pollinator, cultivated plants rarely set seed.

ETYMOLOGY

wahlenbergia: Named in honour of Wahlenberg, a Swedish botanist and author of *A Botany of Lapland*.

albomarginata: From the Latin *albus* 'white' and *marginatus* 'having a border or margin' meaning something with a white margin, often referring to leaves

decora: Beautiful

NVS CODE

WAHASD

CHROMOSOME NUMBER

2n = 36

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2017 | Not Threatened

2012 | Not Threatened

2009 | Not Threatened

2004 | Not Threatened

[Jump to current conservation status](#)

REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

Petterson, J.A. 1997: Revision of the genus *Wahlenbergia* (Campanulaceae) in New Zealand. *New Zealand Journal of Botany* 35: 9-54.

ATTRIBUTION

Fact Sheet Prepared by P.J. de Lange 12 June 2007. Description adapted from Petterson (1997).

NZPCN FACT SHEET CITATION

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

<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/wahlenbergia-albomarginata-subsp-decora/> (Date website was queried)

MORE INFORMATION

<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/wahlenbergia-albomarginata-subsp-decora/>

PDF DATE

27 May 2026