Wahlenbergia matthewsii

COMMON NAMES
rock harebell, Matthews's harebell

BIOSTATUS
Native – Endemic taxon

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS
2023 | At Risk – Naturally Uncommon | Qualifiers: RR
Jump to previous conservation statuses

CATEGORY
Vascular

STRUCTURAL CLASS
Herbs - Dicotyledons other than Composites

FLOWER COLOURS
Blue, Violet/Purple

DETAILED DESCRIPTION
Perennial, erect or spreading subshrub up ot 300 mm tall. Tap root fleshy, white, soon developing rhizomes. Stems arising from base, initally brownish-white, 2-3 mm diameter, soon purple-red to purple, glabrous, branching at the top into 2 or more almost naked scapes. Leaves crowded on stems, 10 x 1 to 50 x 3 mm, dark green, linear, glabrous, margins entire or distantly, finely toothed, sometimes recurved. Scapes 100-150 mm long, simple or branched again, bearing a few, distant, narrow linear bracts 5-15 mm long. Inflorescence, terminal, pedunculate. Calyx glabrous, 4-5 x 1 mm, linear-triangular. Flowers pale blue to pale blue-lilac with white zoning and deeper blue or violet veins, or completely white; corolla 20-40 mm diameter, deeply campnaulate with tube 7 x 5 to 9 x 6 mm, lobes spreading, 10 x 6 - 20 x 8 mm, ovate-lanceolate. Anthers linear, 4 mm long, style equalling corolla tube, stigma usually 2-lobed. Capsule glabrous, 6 x 4 to 12 x 6 mm long, domed obconic. Seeds 0.5 mm long.



Close up of flower, in cultivation ex Kaikoura. Feb 2007. Photographer: Robyn Smith, Licence: CC BY-NC.



Wahlenbergia matthewsii. Photographer: Melissa Hutchison, Licence: CC BY-NC.

SIMILAR TAXA
None. The distinctive erect subshrub habit, and branches bearing numerous, crowded, dark green linear leaves set this species well apart from any of the other New Zealand Wahlenbergia Roth.

DISTRIBUTION
Endemic. South Island, Marlborough , Kaikoura Coast from the Flaxbourne River to Clarence River mouth and inland on the Chalk Range. Also known from the Pikikiruna Range at Gorge Creek (north-west Nelson)

HABITAT
Confined to calcareous rocks, especially fine grained limestone. Coastal to montane (0 - 800 m a.s.l.), and mainly restricted to gorges and steep cliffs. Less commonly found growing in boulder falls and on sparsely vegetated terraces.

THREATS
Abundant within its Marlborough range but rather uncommon in north-west Nelson. Browse dby animals where it is accessible but otherwise very common and not unduly threatened. This specie sis listed mainly because it is a narrow-range endemic.

GENUS
Wahlenbergia

FAMILY
Campanulaceae

AUTHORITY
Wahlenbergia matthewsii Cockayne

SYNONYMS
None

ENDEMIC TAXON
Yes

ENDEMIC GENUS
No

ENDEMIC FAMILY
No

FLOWERING
December - April

FRUITING
January - April

PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE
Easily grown from fresh seed. Does best in full sun, in a free draining, calcareous soil. Excellent in a rockery. A beautiful plant which deserves to be more widely cultivated than it is.

CULTIVATION
Occasionally available from specialist native plant nurseries.

PLANT OF THE MONTH
This plant has been featured as a Plant of the Month – see Trilepidea: NZPCN newsletter for September 2014 for the full story.

ETYMOLOGY
wahlenbergia: Named in honour of Wahlenberg, a Swedish botanist and author of A Botany of Lapland.
matthewsii: After Mathews

NVS CODE
WAHMAT

CHROMOSOME NUMBER
2n = 36

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES
2017 | At Risk – Naturally Uncommon | Qualifiers: RR
2012 | At Risk – Naturally Uncommon | Qualifiers: RR
2009 | At Risk – Naturally Uncommon | Qualifiers: DP
2004 | Range Restricted
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 Botanv 35*: 9-54.

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

MORE INFORMATION
https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/wahlenbergia-matthewsii/

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