

Wahlenbergia pygmaea subsp. pygmaea

COMMON NAMES

North Island 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, White

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Perennial rhizomatous herb with rosulate tufts of leaves at ground level. Leaves bright green, glossy, glabrous or with a few scattered hairs, petiolate; lamina spatulate, 10 × 3 to 20 × 5 mm, 2 mm wide. Leaf margins sparsely toothed, usually red-tinged. Flowers usually insect-pollinated, some forms self-fertile; erect or nodding on short upright scapes, 40-100 mm tall, which may be naked or 1-2-bracted. Corolla soft blue, or blue and white; up to 30 mm diameter, up to 18 mm long, broadly campanulate with tube as broad as or broader than long, lobes c.9 × 7 mm, spreading, broadly elliptic-lanceolate, acute. Calyx lobes c.3.0 × 1.5 mm, glabrous, narrow-triangular. Capsule c.10 × 6 mm, glabrous, domed cylindrical to plump barrel-shaped. Seeds ellipsoid, glossy brown.

SIMILAR TAXA

Differs from subsp. *drucei* by its geographic isolation; by its spatulate leaves whose leaf margins are sparsely toothed and often red-tinged; and by the flowers which are soft blue, white or blue and white

DISTRIBUTION

Endemic. New Zealand: North Island (main axial ranges from the Huiarau to Taranaki Ranges and adjacent Volcanic Peaks (except Mt Taranaki)).

HABITAT

Montane to alpine. Common in herbfield, tussock-grassland, on lava fields, and rocks. Usually above the forest line but extending down rivers.

GENUS

Wahlenbergia

FAMILY

Campanulaceae

AUTHORITY

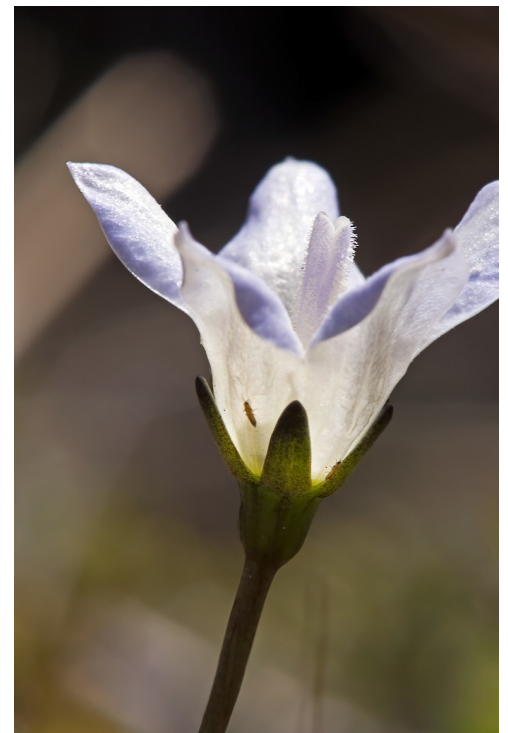
Wahlenbergia pygmaea Colenso subsp. pygmaea

SYNONYMS

Wahlenbergia pygmaea Colenso; Wahlenbergia pygmaea subsp. tararua J.A.Petterson



Mangatepopo, January. Photographer: John Smith-Dodsworth, Licence: CC BY-NC.



Desert Road. Photographer: Jeremy R. Rolfe, Date taken: 30/11/2008, Licence: CC BY.

TAXONOMIC NOTES

Wahlenbergia pygmaea seems only doubtfully distinct from the earlier named South Island endemic *W. albomarginata*, and many botanists regard them as conspecific. This requires further study. In the interim *Wahlenbergia pygmaea* subsp. *tararua* is here treated as part of *W. pygmaea* subsp. *pygmaea* because the morphological distinctions attributed to it by Petterson (1997) are variable and fall within the range of variation seen in *W. pygmaea* subsp. *pygmaea* north of the Tararua Ranges.

ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes

ENDEMIC GENUS

No

ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

FLOWERING

December – May

FRUITING

January - May

PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

Easily grown from tip cuttings and the division of whole plants. Fresh seed germinates readily.

ETYMOLOGY

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

pygmaea: Tiny

NVS CODE

WAHPSP

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

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

MORE INFORMATION

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

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27 May 2026