

Wahlenbergia violacea

COMMON NAMES

violet harebell

BIOSTATUS

Native

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

Radicant perennial herb. **Stems** 100–500 mm tall, slender, erect or decumbent. **Leaves** oblanceolate to lanceolate to linear, shallowly denticulate to subentire, dark green, the lowermost 2–5 pairs opposite in seedlings and young shoots. **Pedicels** slender, 30–150 mm long. **Flowers** self-fertile, glabrous, 5–18 mm diameter, 2–10 mm long, bright blue-violet, paler outside. **Corolla** shortly campanulate, bowl-shaped, often with tube distinctly angled at the sinus; tube 1.5 × 3.0 mm to 3 × 4 mm, ¼ to ½ length of corolla; corolla lobes ovate, acute, overlapping or touching in open flower, 3 × 2 mm to 7 × 4 mm. **Style** capitate, thickened, and blue at apex. **Stigmas** large, often white and fluffy. **Calyx lobes** glabrous 1.5 × 0.7 mm to 4 × 1 mm narrowly triangular, equal in length to corolla lobe. **Capsule** glabrous obconic, with protruding apical valves. **Bud** at anther dehiscence tinted blue. **Seeds** 0.5 mm long.

SIMILAR TAXA

Distinguished from the other New Zealand radicate *Wahlenbergia* Roth. by the blue-violet flower colour, shortly campanulate corolla with bowl-shaped tube, and ovate acute corolla lobes, touching or overlapping in the open flower, giving the flower a compact appearance. Usually there are 2–6 pairs of opposite leaves in young shoots and seedlings.

DISTRIBUTION

Indigenous. New Zealand: North, South and Chatham Islands. Also Norfolk Island.

HABITAT

Rarely coastal, mostly inland and lowland in scrub or bracken-clothed hills, or thin pasture, usually on clay; rural roadsides, burnt or eroded or disturbed places, often invasive in gardens.

GENUS

Wahlenbergia

FAMILY

Campanulaceae

AUTHORITY

Wahlenbergia violacea J.A.Petterson



Rimutaka Rail Trail. Photographer: Jeremy R. Rolfe, Date taken: 04/03/2007, Licence: CC BY.



Boulder Hill, eastern Hutt hills. Photographer: Jeremy R. Rolfe, Date taken: 26/12/2005, Licence: CC BY.

SYNONYMS

Wahlenbergia gracilis sensu Allan nom. inv., Wahlenbergia marginata sensu Tuyn nom. inv., Wahlenbergia marginata var. australis Hatch nom. nud.

ENDEMIC TAXON

No

ENDEMIC GENUS

No

ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

FLOWERING

November–April

FRUITING

December–April

PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

Easily grown from fresh seed and rooted pieces. Does best in a sunny situation in well drained soil. In suitable conditions it freely naturalises and can even become weedy.

ETYMOLOGY

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

violacea: Violet coloured

NVS CODE

WAHVIO

CHROMOSOME NUMBER

2n = 72

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2017 | Not Threatened

2012 | Not Threatened

2009 | Not Threatened

2004 | Not Threatened

[Jump to current conservation status](#)

REGIONAL CONSERVATION STATUSES

Auckland: 2025 | Regionally At Risk – Regionally Declining | Qualifiers: DPR, DPS, DPT, EF, PF Help

Current regional threat status assessments prepared according to Crisp et al. (2025) are displayed when available. The Auckland conservation status information is sourced from the [“Conservation status of vascular plant species in Tāmaki Makaurau / Auckland”](#) Simpkins E et al. (2025) report.

Otago: 2025 | Regionally Threatened – Regionally Vulnerable | Qualifiers: DPR, DPS, DPT, NR, Sp Help

Current regional threat status assessments prepared according to Crisp et al. (2025) are displayed when available. The Otago conservation status information is sourced from the [“Conservation Status of Indigenous Vascular Plants in Otago, 2025”](#) Jarvie S et al. (2025) report.

Northland: 2026 | Regionally Not Threatened Help

Current regional threat status assessments prepared according to Crisp et al. (2025) are displayed when available. The Northland conservation status information is sourced from the [“Conservation status of indigenous vascular plants in Northland | Taitokerau”](#) Ford et al. 2026 report.

REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

Petterson JA. 1997. Revision of the genus *Wahlenbergia* (Campanulaceae) in New Zealand. *New Zealand Journal of Botany* 35: 9–54. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0028825X.1997.10410669>

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-violacea/>

PDF DATE

25 August 2026