

Shawia pachyphylla

COMMON NAMES

thick-leaved tree daisy

BIOSTATUS

Native – Endemic taxon

CATEGORY

Vascular

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Trees & Shrubs - Dicotyledons

SIMPLIFIED DESCRIPTION

Very rare shrub with large broad leathery pale leaves that are white underneath currently only known from some headlands near Ōpōtiki in the North Island. Leaves 55–130 mm long. Flowers with short white petals and with a body 10–20 mm long, in large clusters not projecting much beyond leaves.

FLOWER COLOURS

White

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Shrub up to 3 m tall, with spreading branches. **Bark** greyish–brown to silvery grey, flaking in short curling strips. **Branchlets** 4–angled. **Leaves** clustered at branchlet tips, 55–130 × 35–90 mm, broadly elliptic, ovate to ovate-oblong, coriaceous, upper surface dark green glossy green, lower surface clad in fine, appressed silvery–white to light brown tomentum, apex obtuse, base obtuse or oblique, petioles 4–15 mm long.

Inflorescence corymbose, with 15–50 capitula; capitulum 10–20 mm long; peduncle 8–15 mm long. Involucre cylindrical, bracts 34–44, in 7–9 rows; bracts 1–6 mm long, lower surface densely covered in long, spreading, shaggy, grey to grey–white hairs, upper surface glabrous. **Florets** 7–12 per capitulum. **Ray florets** 2–4, pistillate, irregularly spaced; corolla glabrous, tube 5.0 mm long, ligulate with white limb 4.0 × 1.5 mm, 2–3-lobed at apex. **Disc florets** 5–9, hermaphrodite, pale yellow; tube 6.0 mm long, glabrous; lobes 5, 1.3–1.5 × 0.5 mm, outer surface sparsely hairy.

Achenes narrowly cylindrical, light brown, 9–12-ribbed, with sparse white hairs and sessile glands; pappus 5.0–7.5 mm long, pale orange–yellow.

SIMILAR TAXA

Shawia furfuracea [*Olearia furfuracea*] and *Olearia townsonii* [*O. townsonii*] both grow taller (up to 5 m) but the best way to distinguish them from *S. pachyphylla* is by the number, shape, and ornamentation of the scales (involucral bracts) that enclose the base of the flower heads. *Shawia pachyphylla* has 35–40 of these scales arranged in 10 tiers enclosing the capitula while *Olearia townsonii* has these in tiers of 3–4 and *Shawia furfuracea* in tiers of 2–3. The scales of *Shawia pachyphylla* are also diagnostic as their undersides are densely covered in long, grey silky hairs.

DISTRIBUTION

Endemic. New Zealand: (northern North Island from Coromandel Peninsula to East Cape, very uncommon in Waikato; it was known from rock outcrops near the summit of the main range dividing Coromandel township from Whangapoua Harbour, and more recently (1992) it has been collected from bluffs near Cook's Beach).

HABITAT

Strictly coastal. Growing amongst low scrub on steep cliffs and along stream banks.



Olearia pachyphylla foliage, April, Opape, Eastern Bay of Plenty. Photographer: John Smith-Dodsworth, Licence: CC BY-NC.



Close up flowering capitula, Opape, Eastern Bay of Plenty (April). Photographer: John Smith-Dodsworth, Licence: CC BY-NC.

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2023 | Threatened – Nationally Critical | Qualifiers: CI, CD, OL

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THREATS

Habitat loss through coastal development, and weed encroachment. Goats are believed to be the main reason for this species extinction at one of its eastern Bay of Plenty sites.

DETAILED TAXONOMY

GENUS

Shawia

FAMILY

Asteraceae

AUTHORITY

Shawia pachyphylla (Cheeseman) Nicol & Saldivia

SYNONYMS

Olearia pachyphylla Cheeseman

ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes

ENDEMIC GENUS

No

ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

ECOLOGY

FLOWERING

January–April.

FRUITING

March–May.

PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

Easy from fresh seed and semi-hardwood cuttings. An attractive species for a well drained, sunny location. Plants are prone to verticillium wilt and phytophthora.

OTHER INFORMATION

ETYMOLOGY

pachyphylla: Thick-leaved

NVS CODE

OLEPAC

CHROMOSOME NUMBER

2n = 108

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2017 | Threatened – Nationally Critical | Qualifiers: CD, OL, St

2012 | Threatened – Nationally Critical | Qualifiers: OL

2009 | Threatened – Nationally Critical | Qualifiers: OL

2004 | Threatened – Nationally Endangered

[Jump to current conservation status](#)

REFERENCING AND CITATIONS

REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

de Lange PJ, Heenan PB, Norton DA, Rolfe JR, Sawyer JWD. 2010. Threatened Plants of New Zealand. Canterbury University Press, Christchurch. 471 p.

Saldivia, P.; Nicol, D.A. 2025: Reinstatement, broader circumscription, and infrageneric classification of *Shawia* (Astereae, Celmisiinae), a large woody genus endemic to Australasia. *Phytoneuron* 49: 1–43.

ATTRIBUTION

Fact Sheet prepared for the NZPCN by P.J. de Lange 14 April 2006. Description by P.B Heenan and P.J. de Lange and subsequently published in de Lange et al. (2010).

NZPCN FACT SHEET CITATION

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MORE INFORMATION

<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/shawia-pachyphylla/>

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