Leucogenes tarahaoa

COMMON NAMES
Mount Peel edelweiss

BIOSTATUS
Native – Endemic taxon

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS
2023 | Threatened – Nationally Endangered | Qualifiers: OL
Jump to previous conservation statuses

CATEGORY
Vascular

STRUCTURAL CLASS
Herbs - Dicotyledonous composites

FLOWER COLOURS
Yellow

Big Mt Peel, Canterbury. Photographer: John Smith-Dodsworth, Licence: CC BY-NC.

Mount Peel. Jan 1993. Photographer: Barbara Mitcalfe, Licence: CC BY-NC.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION
Perennial evergreen alpine subshrub forming dense, compact cushions. Leafy stems numerous, forming erect branched rosettes, 15 × 15 mm, including leaves. Leaves alternate, sessile, spreading, , 8–10 × 3–4 mm, lanceolate, apex acuminate; margin entire, smooth; clothed on both surfaces with thin shinning, silvery-white, tightly appressed tomentum. Peduncles distinct, terminal on leafy stems, 20-40 mm, clothed in dense woolly silvery-white tomentum. Inflorescence 10–25 mm diameter, consisting of 3–6 capitula arranged in a flat to convex, congested, corymbose cluster packed with woolly crimped tomentum and surrounded by 10–15 spreading, lanceolate, acuminate, woolly, crimped leafy bracts, c. 10 × 4 mm, forming a pseudo-ray. Involucral bracts 2 or 3-seriate, papery, linear-lanceolate, c. 6 mm long. Receptacle flat or convex, nude. Outer florets filiform, , 6–16, in 1 series; corolla yellow, c. 4 mm long, dilated towards apex, 4-lobed. Inner florets tubular, hermaphrodite, 18–45; corolla yellow, c. 4 mm long, dilated towards apex, 5-lobed. Style arms long, curved, truncate, slightly papillose at apex. Anthers yellow, sagittate at base, with short tails. Pappus in 1 series, c. 4 mm long, slightly shorter in filiform florets, flattened at base, scabrid and shining, thickened at tips. Achene spindleshaped, c. 1.5 mm long, obscurely angled; hairs many, 0.1–0.6 mm long.

SIMILAR TAXA
A very distinctive species separated from the other three *Leucogenes* by the compact, cushion forming habit, silvery white leaves and octoploid chromosome number. A detailed account of this species and its relationships is provided by B.P.J. Molloy (NZ Journal Botany 33(1): 56-59 (1995)).

DISTRIBUTION
Endemic to Mt Peel near Geraldine, in the South Island.

HABITAT
An alpine species growing in stable soils within shaded fell-field, on ledges, and within soil-filled crevices.

THREATS
A very localised species confined to the fell field of the summits of Middle Mt Peel and the main ridge leading to Big Mt Peel. Recent field work suggests that these populations are declining although the exact cause is unclear. Browse by ungulates was evident on flowers in March 2022 (Melissa Hutchison, pers. obs.). The most significant losses have occurred on Middle Peel, where the *Leucogenes* was already considered to be very uncommon.

GENUS
Leucogenes

FAMILY
Asteraceae

AUTHORITY
Leucogenes tarahaoa Molloy

SYNONYMS
None

ENDEMIC TAXON
Yes

ENDEMIC GENUS
Yes

ENDEMIC FAMILY
No

FLOWERING
December to February

FRUITING
February to April

LIFE CYCLE AND DISPERSAL
Pappate cypselae are wind dispersed (Thorsen et al., 2009).

PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE
Difficult. Should not be removed from the wild.

CULTIVATION
Not commercially available but plants are held by specialist growers.

ETYMOLOGY
leucogenes: White genus

CHROMOSOME NUMBER
2n = 112

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES
2017 | Threatened – Nationally Vulnerable | Qualifiers: DP, OL
2012 | Threatened – Nationally Vulnerable | Qualifiers: DP, OL
2009 | Threatened – Nationally Vulnerable | Qualifiers: DP, OL
2004 | Serious Decline
Jump to current conservation status

REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING
Molloy, B.P.J. 1995: Two new species of *Leucogenes* (Inuleae: Asteraceae) from New Zealand, and typification of *L. grandiceps*. *New Zealand Journal of Botany 33(1)*: 53-63.
Thorsen, M.J.; Dickinson, K.J.M.; Seddon, P.J. 2009. Seed dispersal systems in the New Zealand flora. *Perspectives in Plant Ecology, Evolution and Systematics 11*: 285-309

ATTRIBUTION
Fact Sheet by P.J. de Lange (25 July 2005). Description based on Molloy (1995).

MORE INFORMATION
https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/leucogenes-tarahaoa/

PDF DATE
25 August 2026