

Anemonastrum tenuicaule

COMMON NAMES

New Zealand anemone

BIOSTATUS

Native – Endemic taxon

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2023 | Not Threatened | Qualifiers: Sp, DPS, DPT

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CATEGORY

Vascular

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Herbs - Dicotyledons other than Composites

FLOWER COLOURS

Brown, Red/Pink

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Perennial, rhizomatous herb (50-)150-500 mm tall. Rhizomes erect or creeping. Basal Petioles 20-150 mm long somewhat channeled, glabrescent, sparsely covered with appressed bristle-like hairs. Leaves 1-4(-6), 10-30 x 10-20 mm, 3-foliolate light green above, paler beneath, somewhat fleshy, leaflets cut to about half of length, into 3 entire or trifid segments, these sessile or shortly petiolate, sparsely bristly hairy above, cuneate at base, apex acute; subfloral leaves trifid, cuneate. Flowers solitary, nodding, 10-150 mm diameter. Peduncle 10-100-150 mm long, sparsely covered in appressed bristly hairs. Perianth segments 5-7, pink to red-brown, glabrous (upper surface minutely papillate). Achenes borne in erect heads, glabrous.

SIMILAR TAXA

None

DISTRIBUTION

Endemic. New Zealand, North and South Islands from the Tararua ranges south.

HABITAT

Upper montane to subalpine habitats (c.900-1300 m a.s.l.) where it grows in herbfield and short to tall tussock grassland. usually in damp sites, flushes or seepages.

THREATS

Anemonastrum tenuicaule is a biologically sparse species. In the northern part of its range it is extremely uncommon. However from about North Otago south it is more common, and in places it is can be locally abundant. Within its range it is mostly secure, occurring on public conservation land. It is possible that some lowland populations are threatened by competition from weeds.

GENUS

Anemonastrum

FAMILY

Ranunculaceae



Hunter Mountains, Fiordland. Photographer: Jesse Bythell, Date taken: 19/12/2012, Licence: CC BY-NC.



Hunter Mountains, Fiordland. Photographer: Jesse Bythell, Date taken: 19/12/2012, Licence: CC BY-NC.

AUTHORITY

Anemonastrum tenuicaule (Cheeseman) de Lange et Mosyakin

SYNONYMS

Ranunculus tenuicaulis Cheeseman; *Anemone tenuicaulis* (Cheeseman) Parkin et Sledge; *Anemonidium tenuicaule* (Cheeseman) Christenh. et Byng

ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes

ENDEMIC GENUS

No

ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

FLOWERING

November - January

FRUITING

December - May

LIFE CYCLE AND DISPERSAL

Hooked achenes are dispersed by attaching to fur, feathers and clothing (Thorsen et al., 2009).

PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

Difficult. Should not be removed from the wild.

ETYMOLOGY

anemonastrum: The meaning of the genus was not clearly specified by the naming author Josef Holub 1930-1999 (Holub 1973). The root is derived from 'Anemone' - from the Greek *ánemos* 'wind'. However, 'astrum' has multiple meanings. In one case it could mean 'a star' (Latin 'astrum' (from Ancient Greek 'astron', a more poetic variant of 'aster')) hence 'star anemone'. In another meaning 'astrum' could refer to the close resemblance of the genus to *Anemone* or that it is a 'little *Anemone*'. In this regard 'astrum' is a noun-suffix (genitive -astri) in the second declension, expressing an incomplete resemblance to, some likeness to, an inferiority, or even usage in a diminutive sense. Probably the second explanation is preferable, because Holub (1973: 158) commented "Therefore a new name, *Anemonastrum* is proposed here for the genus under consideration, which is very closely related from the etymological point of view to *Anemone*" Opinion from: Prof. Sergei L. Mosyakin

tenuicaule: Thin-stemmed

NVS CODE

ANETNU

CHROMOSOME NUMBER

2n = 28

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2017 | Not Threatened | Qualifiers: DP, Sp

2012 | At Risk – Naturally Uncommon | Qualifiers: Sp

2009 | At Risk – Naturally Uncommon

2004 | Sparse

[Jump to current conservation status](#)

REGIONAL CONSERVATION STATUSES

Otago: 2025 | Regionally At Risk – Regionally Naturally Uncommon | Qualifiers: DPS, DPT, NStr, Sp Help

The regional threat classification system leverages off the national assessments in the NZTCS, providing information relevant for the regional context. Otago conservation status information is sourced from the "[Conservation Status of Indigenous Vascular Plants in Otago, 2025](#)" Jarvie S et al. (2025) report.

REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

Allan, H.H. 1961: Flora of New Zealand. Vol. I, Wellington, Government Printer.

Holub, J. 1973: New names in Phanerogamae 2. *Folia Geobotanica & Phytotaxonomica (Praha)* 8(2): 155–179

Mosyakin, S.L.; de Lange, P.J. 2018: *Anemonastrum tenuicaule* and *A. antucense* (Ranunculaceae), new combinations for a New Zealand endemic species and its South American relative. *PhytoKeys* 99: 107-124.

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(4): 285-309

Webb CJ, Sykes WR, Garnock-Jones PJ 1988. Flora of New Zealand. Vol. IV. Botany Division, DSIR, Christchurch.

ATTRIBUTION

Fact sheet prepared for NZPCN by P.J. de Lange 12 February 2004. Description adapted from Allan (1961) and Webb et al. (1988). See also Mosyakin & de Lange (2018).

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MORE INFORMATION

<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/anemonastrum-tenuicaule/>

PDF DATE

25 May 2026