

Aciphylla lecomtei

SYNONYMS

None (first described in 1979)

FAMILY

Apiaceae

AUTHORITY

Aciphylla lecomtei J.W.Dawson

FLORA CATEGORY

Vascular – Native

ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes

ENDEMIC GENUS

No

ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Herbs - Dicotyledons other than Composites

NVS CODE

ACILEC

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2017 | At Risk – Declining | Qualifiers: DP, RR, Sp

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2012 | At Risk – Naturally Uncommon | Qualifiers: Sp

2009 | At Risk – Naturally Uncommon

2004 | Range Restricted

DISTRIBUTION

Endemic. New Zealand: South Island (The Remarkables, Hector Mountains, and Garvie Mountains).

HABITAT

Alpine (1400–1900 m a.s.l.) usually on rock in steep crevices, leages and hollows of rock outcrops and cliff faces, or amongst boulders, rarely in surrounding tall-tussock grassland.



Remarkable Range (January). Photographer: John Smith-Dodsworth, Licence: CC BY-NC.



Hector Mountains. Photographer: John Barkla, Licence: CC BY.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Rosettes up to 350 mm diameter in groups of 25 or more. **Leaves** coriaceous, yellowish-green, up to 250 mm long, 1-pinnate, usually with 4 pairs of leaflets, these more or less plane; sheath up to 90 × 6–12 mm, sheath joint obscure; stipules 35 × 1–1.5 mm, simple; petiole up to 45 × 3–54 mm, more or less convex above, margins rounded, pulvinus evident, 8–10 mm long; lamina obtriangular in outline, lowermost leaflet up to 100 × 3–4 mm, apex acute with a spine 1 mm long, margins finely tuberculate, mid- and margin ribs 0.2 mm wide vein not raised.

Inflorescences broad. **Female inflorescence** up to 520 mm or more long, stem 300 × 10 mm, pale yellow to brown; head 125 × 90 mm, more or less ovate in outline; compound umbels 12–16, usually arranged in 3 or 4 whorls, the terminal umbel larger than to about the same size as the laterals; lower bracts 70 mm long with a sheath 20 × 4–8 mm, stipules, and 1–2 pairs of leaflets, upper bracts smaller and simple with stipules. Lower compound umbels up to 70 mm long with peduncles up to 50 × 2.5 mm; primary bracteoles simple, up to 9 × 1 mm; simple umbels 13 with peduncles up to 15 × 0.8 mm; secondary bracteoles simple, up to 7 × 1 mm; 15 flowers per umbel, pedicels 3 × 0.2 mm. **Sepals** up to 0.8 mm long. **Petals** up to 1.4 × 0.7 mm, not inflexed; staminodes up to 0.6 mm long. **Male inflorescence** up to 420 mm long, stem 290 × 8 mm, pale yellow to brown; head 140 × 105 mm, almost circular in outline; compound umbels c. 8, tending to be in 2–3 whorls, the terminal umbel generally larger than the laterals; bracts and bracteoles similar to female inflorescences; lower compound umbels up to 80 mm long with peduncles up to 15 × 0.4 mm; 20 flowers per umbel and pedicels up to 5 × 0.2 mm. **Sepals** up to 0.8 mm long. **Petals** up to 1.3 × 0.6 mm, not inflexed; stamens up to 2.5 mm long. **Mericarps** 4.1 × 2 mm, dull, pale brown, lateral ribs up to 0.4 mm wide; style up to 1.2 mm long.

SIMILAR TAXA

Most likely to be confused with *A. similis* Cheeseman which is found well north of the range of *A. lecomtei* in an area centred on the Two Thumb Range to about the Lewis Pass and west thereof. *A. lecomtei* differs from *A. similis* by its preference for rocky rather than grassland habitats, its more robust growth habit, larger rosettes and in having 4 pairs of leaflets rather than 6–7 or more. From *A. montana* J.F.Armstr. var. *montana*, *A. lecomtei* differs by having 4 rather than 3 leaflets, more clearly defined rosettes, and *A. lecomtei* has broad rather than narrow inflorescences. *Aciphylla montana* is allopatric from *A. lecomtei*.

FLOWERING

December–February

FLOWER COLOURS

Brown

FRUITING

January–April

LIFE CYCLE

Winged schizocarps are dispersed primarily by wind (Thorsen et al., 2009).

PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

Has been cultivated in the past by Mr Jim le Comte of Alouette Nurseries, Ashburton but probably not in cultivation now. Its cultural requirements are not clear but it was grown successfully for 10 years in Hamilton City in the Waikato in a sunny, free draining soil.

THREATS

A narrow range endemic common within its known geographic range. Accessible plants maybe browsed by animals.

ETYMOLOGY

aciphylla: From the Latin acicula 'needle' and the Greek phyllum 'leaf', meaning needle-leaf.

lecomtei: Named after James Ronald LeComte (1927–1987), a New Zealand botanist specialising in the *Aciphylla* genus.

ATTRIBUTION

Fact Sheet prepared for NZPCN by P.J. de Lange 28 May 2006: Description adapted from Dawson (1979).

REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

Dawson JW. 1979. *Aciphylla montana* Armstrong, *A. lecomtei* sp. nov., and related species. *New Zealand Journal of Botany* 17(3): 339–351. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0028825X.1979.10426907>.

Thorsen MJ, Dickinson KJM, Seddon PJ. 2009. Seed dispersal systems in the New Zealand flora. *Perspectives in Plant Ecology, Evolution and Systematics* 11: 285–309. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ppees.2009.06.001>.

NZPCN FACT SHEET CITATION

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MORE INFORMATION

<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/aciphylla-lecomtei/>

PDF DATE

27 September 2024