

Anisotome acutifolia

COMMON NAMES

Snares Islands anisotome

BIOSTATUS

Native – Endemic taxon

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2023 | Threatened – Nationally Critical | Qualifiers: CD, IE, OL, RR

[Jump to previous conservation statuses](#)

CATEGORY

Vascular

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Herbs - Dicotyledons other than Composites

SIMPLIFIED DESCRIPTION

A large perennial stoloniferous member of the carrot family reaching up to 1 metre across and up to 2 metres in height when flowering. The large soft much-divided leaves are bright green, overtopped by a pale green fleshy flower stem with clusters of white or pale-pink, flowers. Found only on the Snares Islands group.

FLOWER COLOURS

Red/Pink, White

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Stout, perennial, shortly creeping, stoloniferous herb reaching up to 2 m tall when flowering. Stolons up to 0.3 m long, stout, fleshy, when bruised leaking clear fluid. **Basal leaves** numerous, coriaceous, 0.50–0.70 m × 0.15–0.20 m, dark green, 2–3-pinnate; primary leaflets in 5–7 pairs, ovate, shortly petiolulate, subcoriaceous, prominently veined; secondary leaflets ovate to lanceolate; pinnately or pinnatifidly divided into deeply toothed and incised segments; teeth acute, not piliferous; **petioles** 0.2–0.35 m × 4–10 mm, cylindrical; sheaths 40–80 × 25–40 mm, prolonged at apex into an undivided membranous ligule 40–80 mm long; sheaths of cauline leaves inflated; peduncles 90–150 mm long. Inflorescence axis up to 2 m tall and 13 mm diameter at first node. **Flowers** dirty white to pale pinkish with a slight foetid odour. Staminate plants not described. Pistillate plants bearing an involucre of few linear bracts 6–8 × 1–1.5 mm or not; involucre of several linear bracteoles 7.0–10.0 mm × 0.5–1.0 mm; rays 20–30, 10–25 mm long; pedicels 20–50, 3–5 mm long; styles robust, 0.5–1.0 mm long, divergent. **Merica** 4.0–5.0 × 2.5–3.0 mm long, narrowly elliptic to elliptic, rarely ovate-elliptic, 4.0–4.8(–5.3) mm long; apex and base usually obtuse, sometimes narrow to apex; 5-ribbed, ribs even, equal, thin, narrowly winged with a fine hyaline margin. Surface dull, ribs pale to light orange-yellow, yellow or orange; vittae obscured on dorsal surface, rarely visible, and if so grey brown.

SIMILAR TAXA

The only species of *Anisotome* present on the Snares, *A. acutifolia* is similar to very large states of *A. lyallii*, and is evidently related to it. The species is distinguished from *A. lyallii* and indeed all other large indigenous *Anisotome* by the ligulate leaf sheath (a condition seen otherwise only in the diminutive alpine *A. flexuosa* and *A. imbricata*). A similar though less well defined structure is seen in *A. antipoda* and *A. latifolia*, the two other large subantarctic species. *Anisotome acutifolia* is poorly known and would repay critical study both taxonomically and also because it is known from so few plants.

DISTRIBUTION

Endemic. Tini Heke | **Snares Islands** where it is known from North East and Broughton Islands.

HABITAT

Lowland (60 m.a.s.l.), in open ground on margin of dense *Olearia lyallii* forest, and also recorded from dense *Poa foliosa* tussock land. Growing semi-shaded sites on deep, permanently damp, peaty soil enriched with bird guano.



THREATS

In 2013, it was believed not to be threatened, this has since been correctly re-assessed. The following statement by P de Lange summarises the case for its present threat status. "It is known from only a handful of sites (which may even comprise single plants). It is almost certainly incorrectly listed not because it is actively threatened but rather because the total area of occupancy is believed less than 1 ha. About 1000-3000 mature plants are known but few seedlings have ever been seen, and many of the plants observed could be derived through vegetative spread."

GENUS

Anisotome

FAMILY

Apiaceae

AUTHORITY

Anisotome acutifolia (Kirk) Cockayne

SYNONYMS

Ligusticum acutifolium Kirk, Aciphylla acutifolia (Kirk) Cockayne

TAXONOMIC NOTES

A population based genetic study of this species is needed to ascertain how many distinct individuals are. *Anisotome acutifolia* is in some respects intermediate between *A. lyallii* and *A. latifolia* and it may have evolved through past hybridisation between these two species.

ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes

ENDEMIC GENUS

No

ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

FLOWERING

December - January.

FRUITING

January - February.

LIFE CYCLE AND DISPERSAL

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

PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

Difficult. Should not be removed from the wild. This species has never been successfully cultivated.

ETYMOLOGY

anisotome: Unequal sided

acutifolia: From the Latin acutus 'sharp' and folius 'leaf', with pointed leaves

NVS CODE

ANIACU

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

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

2012 | Threatened – Nationally Critical | Qualifiers: CD, IE, OL, RR, St

2009 | At Risk – Naturally Uncommon | Qualifiers: OL, IE

2004 | Range Restricted

[Jump to current conservation status](#)

REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

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>.

ATTRIBUTION

Fact sheet prepared by P.J. de Lange for NZPCN (1 June 2013)

NZPCN FACT SHEET CITATION

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MORE INFORMATION

<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/anisotome-acutifolia/>

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