

Lobelia ionantha

COMMON NAMES

hypsula

BIOSTATUS

Native

CATEGORY

Vascular

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Herbs - Dicotyledons other than Composites

FLOWER COLOURS

Blue, White

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Creeping, prostrate, usually glabrous herb; rooting at leaf nodes. Leaves alternate, upright to spreading; lamina 3.0–9.0 × 2.0–7.0 mm, green, usually blotched purple-brown, orbicular, suborbicular, to broadly elliptic, often oblanceolate and oblong in shade glabrous to rarely hairy, hairs when present < 0.2 mm long and patent, midvein faint, lateral veins faint to obscure, margin with 5–7 prominent denticles or shallow teeth, apex obtuse to subacute; petiole 0.5–1.5 × 0.2–0.5 mm. Flowers hermaphrodite, axillary, solitary; peduncle 0.5–27.0 mm long, 0.4–0.6 mm wide, usually glabrous. Calyx with short tube adnate to ovary; lobes 5, 1.3–2.8 × 0.4–0.8 mm, green, narrow triangular to lanceolate, abaxial surface usually glabrous hairy, adaxial surface glabrous or occasionally sparsely hairy near apex; apex subacute and with conspicuous usually translucent tip. Corolla 8.0–12.0 mm diam. when open, white to pale blue, two green or yellow-green markings between the sinus of the front three corolla lobes, with conspicuous purple-violet blotches at the base of the three front corolla lobes; tube 3.5–6.0 mm long, 1.0–2.0 mm wide, fused, abaxial surface glabrous to sparsely hairy, adaxial surface sometimes sparsely hairy; lobes 5, 4.0–6.0 × 1.2–2.4 mm, narrow-lanceolate, recurved, abaxial surface glabrous to rarely sparsely hairy, abaxial surface glabrous, apex subacute. Filaments 4.0–7.5 mm long, 0.2–0.3 mm wide, fused below anthers, adnate from base to upper half of the corolla tube, white occasionally flushed pale blue in distal part, becoming translucent and flushed green toward proximal part. Anthers 1.2–1.6 mm long, united into a tube around style, purple-brown, curved over at top, with small central pore < 0.1 mm diam.; 2 awns and several hairs present at apex on lower anthers, awns 0.2–0.4 mm long, hairs < 0.2 mm long. Ovary 1.5–2.5 × 1.1–1.4 mm, green, glabrous to moderately hairy, apex obtuse. Style 5.0–8.0 mm long, 0.2–0.5 mm wide, white to pale green, exerted beyond anthers. Stigma bilobed, lobes 0.3–0.7 × 0.4–1.0 mm, pink, subtended by whorl of hairs. Capsule 2.5–5.0 × 1.4–2.5 mm, green, often flushed purple-brown; thin-walled, seeds visible through wall, indehiscent and without apical valves, disintegrating with age; apex crowned with persistent style base; base obtuse to slightly cuneate. Seed, 0.4–0.5 mm long; olive green semi-glossy, glabrous, broadly elliptic to obovate-oblong, slightly compressed and often squared with flattened faces.



Coleridge, Canterbury. Photographer: Melissa Hutchison, Date taken: 07/05/2022, Licence: CC BY-NC.



Waimakariri Basin, ephemeral wetland. Photographer: Jane Gosden, Date taken: 13/12/2023, Licence: CC BY-NC-SA.

SIMILAR TAXA

Differs from *Lobelia carens* Heenan and *L. fatiscens* Heenan by its usually glabrous stems, leaves, and flower parts, from *L. carens* by the large flowers that have purple blotches at the base of the lower three corolla lobes, and from *L. fatiscens* by its usually orbicular leaves, larger flowers, diploid ($2n = 14$) rather than tetraploid ($2n = 28$) chromosome number.

DISTRIBUTION

Endemic. New Zealand: South Island (Marlborough, Canterbury, Otago, and Southland).

HABITAT

Lowland to subalpine. A species of the margins of lake, tarn and ephemeral wetlands, stream banks, and seepages in tussock grassland, where it grows with other short turf and small herb species.

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2023 | At Risk – Declining

THREATS

Threatened because the wetland habitats it occupies have been or continue to be modified by changes in land use and naturalised plant species.

DETAILED TAXONOMY

FAMILY

Campanulaceae

AUTHORITY

Lobelia ionantha Heenan

SYNONYMS

Hypsela rivalis E.Wimm.; *Isotoma rivalis* (E.Wimm.) Lammers

ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes

ENDEMIC GENUS

No

ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

ECOLOGY

FLOWERING

October - April

FRUITING

November - June

PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

Easily grown from fresh seed and rooted pieces. An attractive ground cover for a damp sunny or semi-shaded site. An excellent pot plant.

WETLAND PLANT INDICATOR STATUS RATING

OBL: Obligate Wetland

Almost always is a hydrophyte, rarely in uplands (non-wetlands).

OTHER INFORMATION

ETYMOLOGY

lobelia: Named after Lobel, pioneer botanist

NVS CODE

LOBION

CHROMOSOME NUMBER

2n = 14

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2017 | At Risk – Declining | Qualifiers: DP

2012 | At Risk – Declining | Qualifiers: DP

2009 | At Risk – Declining | Qualifiers: DP

2004 | Not Threatened

REFERENCING AND CITATIONS

REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

Heenan et al. 2008: Generic placement in *Lobelia* and revised taxonomy for New Zealand species previously in *Hypsela* and *Isotoma* (Lobeliaceae). *New Zealand Journal of Botany* 46: 87–100.

ATTRIBUTION

Description modified from Heenan *et al.* (2008).

MORE INFORMATION

<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/lobelia-ionantha/>

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03 October 2024