

Shawia albida

BIOSTATUS

Native – Endemic taxon

CATEGORY

Vascular

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Trees & Shrubs - Dicotyledons

SIMPLIFIED DESCRIPTION

Spreading small coastal tree of northern North Island with grooved flaky bark and bearing leathery light green wavy leaves that have a white underside. Twigs grooved on the upper surface. Leaves taper towards the pointed tip. Some of the hairs on the stems are star-shaped. Flowers white, in large clusters.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

See [Flora of New Zealand](#) for a description

DISTRIBUTION

Endemic. Aotearoa / New Zealand, Te Ika a Maui / North Island - northern portion of island from Ahipara sporadically to the Kaipara south to north Taranaki, also locally present on the islands and shoreline of the Hauraki Gulf, Coromandel Peninsula and Tairāwhiti / East Cape.

HABITAT

Shawia albida is a coastal species favouring coastal headlands where it often grows on slip scars, rubble slopes or in canopy gaps amongst other coastal forest trees. Common co-associates include *Entelea arborescens*, *Kunzea robusta*, *Metrosideros excelsa*, *Leptospermum hoipolloi*, *Myoporum laetum*, *Shawia angulata*, *S. furfuracea*, *Pomaderris kumerahou*, *P. rugosa*, *Vitex lucens*, *Veronica* spp., *Pittosporum crassifolium*, and around Tairāwhiti *P. ralphii*. *Shawia albida* usually grows in small stands of three or more trees in places suggesting that germination has occurred following some disturbance event e.g, slip, fire, boulder fall.

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2023 | At Risk – Declining | Qualifiers: CI, DPR, DPS, DPT, PF

[Jump to previous conservation statuses](#)



Maunganui Bluff, Northland. Photographer: Melissa Hutchison, Date taken: 16/05/2022, Licence: CC BY-NC.



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THREATS

Never a common species *Shawia albida* has hitherto not been considered 'At Risk' or 'Threatened'. It is now recognised that over large parts of this species range it is not only uncommon, but also that it is scarcely recruiting, and that some populations are in decline as a consequence of weed invasion, animal browse pressure, land development and coastal erosion. Therefore, re-evaluation of its conservation status is necessary. Currently there are no population estimates for the species. It is however known to be widespread, and while biologically sparse in its occurrences, it may on occasion be locally abundant. On the basis of these observations and limited counts of adults in some parts of this species range suggests a population of $\leq 10,000$ mature individuals.

Recent investigation of populations within the species strong holds such as around greater Auckland has discovered that at many sites only mature trees are present, recruitment is either absent or limited, either as a consequence of competition from weeds such as Pampas grass (*Cortaderia jubata*, *C. selloana*), gorse (*Ulex europaeus*), bone seed (*Osteospermum moniliferum*), *Agapanthus praecox* subsp. *orientalis*, smilax (*Asparagus asparagoides*), and *Asparagus scandens* or forest succession. In these areas decline rates of 10-30% over the next 10 years have been predicted (Simpkins et al. 2022) Coastal resort development has also hastened declines through habitat loss and the further influx of weeds stemming from garden waste dumps and cultivation escapes. *Olearia albida* is also vulnerable to coastal erosion, roadworks, and direct browse pressure from livestock, feral goats (*Capra hircus*) and possums (*Trichosurus vulpecula*).

DETAILED TAXONOMY

GENUS

Shawia

FAMILY

Asteraceae

AUTHORITY

Shawia albida (Hook. f.) Sch.Bip.

SYNONYMS

Eurybia albida Hook.f., *Olearia albida* (Hook.f.) Hook.f., *Olearia albida* (Hook.f.) Hook.f. var. *albida*

ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes

ENDEMIC GENUS

No

ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

OTHER INFORMATION

ETYMOLOGY

albida: From the Latin 'alba', meaning somewhat white

NVS CODE

OLEALB

CHROMOSOME NUMBER

2n = 324

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2017 | Not Threatened | Qualifiers: DP

2012 | Not Threatened

2009 | Not Threatened

2004 | Not Threatened

[Jump to current conservation status](#)

REGIONAL CONSERVATION STATUSES

Auckland: 2025 | Threatened – Regionally Endangered | Qualifiers: Sp, DPR, DPS, DPT, PF, TL Help

The regional threat classification system leverages off the national assessments in the NZTCS, providing information relevant for the regional context. Auckland conservation status information is sourced from the “Conservation status of vascular plant species in Tāmaki Makaurau / Auckland” Simpkins E et al. (2025) report.

REFERENCING AND CITATIONS

REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

Simpkins, E., Woolly, J., de Lange, P., Kilgour, C., Cameron, E., Melzer, S. 2022: Conservation status of vascular plant species in Tāmaki Makaurau / Auckland. *Technical Report 2022/19*, Auckland Council, Auckland.

Saldivia, P.; Nicol, D.A. 2025: Reinstatement, broader circumscription, and infrageneric classification of *Shawia* (Astereae, Celmisiinae), a large woody genus endemic to Australasia. *Phytoneuron* 49: 1–43.

NZPCN FACT SHEET CITATION

Please cite as: de Lange, P.J. (Year at time of access): *Shawia albida* Fact Sheet (content continuously updated). New Zealand Plant Conservation Network. <https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/shawia-albida/> (Date website was queried)

MORE INFORMATION

<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/shawia-albida/>

PDF DATE

04 November 2025