

Wahlenbergia albomarginata subsp. decora

COMMON NAMES

New Zealand harebell, harebell

SYNONYMS

None (described in 1997)

FAMILY

Campanulaceae

AUTHORITY

Wahlenbergia albomarginata subsp. decora J.A.Petterson

FLORA CATEGORY

Vascular – Native

ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes

ENDEMIC GENUS

No

ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Herbs - Dicotyledons other than Composites

CHROMOSOME NUMBER

2n = 36

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2017 | Not Threatened

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2012 | Not Threatened

2009 | Not Threatened

2004 | Not Threatened

DISTRIBUTION

Endemic. New Zealand: South Island (Nelson Lakes National Park; possibly also North-west Nelson and Fiordland)

HABITAT

Alpine. Inhabiting scree margins and rock crevices

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Perennial herb with stout taproot, and short crowded tufts of rosulate leaves, radical leaves sparse, these sometimes alternate on elongated stems (shade form). Leaves dark green, yellow-green to red green (not drying glaucous), more or less petiolate, dentate to serrate, lamina 10 × 2 to 40 × 10 mm, obovate to oblanceolate, marginal teeth conspicuous, gradually narrowed to petiole as long as the lamina or longer. Flowers fragrant, insect-pollinated, borne on short, slender scapes 30-100 mm long; narrowly campanulate-rotate, corolla pale flax blue to pale blue-violet, often with white zoning and deeper coloured veins, or all white, 15-20 mm diameter, 10-15 mm long, corolla tube 4 × 3 to 10 × 6 mm, lobes 6 × 3 to 12 × 5 mm; style equal in length to corolla tube, lobes 2 or 3. Calyx lobes less than ¼ corolla length; capsule domed cylindric, 6-8 × 4 mm. Seeds 0.5 mm long, ellipsoid, smooth, glossy brown when mature.



Routeburn Track, Fiordland. Photographer: John Sawyer, Licence: CC BY-NC.

SIMILAR TAXA

Similar to subsp. *laxa* (G.Simpson) J.A.Petterson, from which it differs mostly by its restriction to high alpine habitats; development of a strong taproot; development of short crowded rosettes in scree habitats; slender, short (30-100 mm long) scapes; fragrant flowers that are 15-20 mm diameter and 10-15 mm long. The distinctions between subsp. *decora* and subsp. *albomarginata*, subsp. *laxa* and subsp. *flexilis* (Petrie) J.A.Petterson, appear trivial and overlapping. The taxonomic status of all these subspecies (except perhaps subsp. *olivina* J.A.Petterson) seems questionable, and would repay further critical study.

FLOWERING

November – April

FLOWER COLOURS

Blue, Violet/Purple

FRUITING

December - April

PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

Easily grown from tip cuttings and the division of whole plants. Fresh seed germinates readily. Being insect-pollinated and having an indigenous pollinator, cultivated plants rarely set seed.

ETYMOLOGY

wahlenbergia: Named in honour of Wahlenberg, a Swedish botanist and author of *A Botany of Lapland*.

albomarginata: From the Latin *albus* 'white' and *marginatus* 'having a border or margin' meaning something with a white margin, often referring to leaves

decora: Beautiful

WHERE TO BUY

Not commercially available.

ATTRIBUTION

Fact Sheet Prepared by P.J. de Lange 12 June 2007. Description adapted from Petterson (1997).

REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

Petterson, J.A. 1997: Revision of the genus *Wahlenbergia* (Campanulaceae) in New Zealand. *New Zealand Journal of Botany* 35: 9-54.

NZPCN FACT SHEET CITATION

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<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/wahlenbergia-albomarginata-subsp-decora/> (Date website was queried)

MORE INFORMATION

<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/wahlenbergia-albomarginata-subsp-decora/>

PDF DATE

17 September 2024