

Haastia pulvinaris

COMMON NAMES

Vegetable sheep

BIOSTATUS

Native

CATEGORY

Vascular

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Herbs - Dicotyledonous composites

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Stout perennial forming rounded very compact masses up to 2 x 1 m diameter; branchlets with leaves c.20 mm diameter, densely compacted. Leaves c.8-10 × 6-10 mm; apices thickened and crenulate and concealed by dense brush of long tangled slightly fulvous hairs, both surfaces or underside only clad in long hairs; veins 3-15, anastomosing above. Receptacle flat or slightly convex, c.5 mm diameter. Involucral bracts linear, obtuse to acute, glabrous except at apices. Achenes compressed, linear, c.2 mm long. Pappus-hairs flattened at base, up to 9 mm long.

SIMILAR TAXA

Haastia pulvinaris is easily recognised by its growth habit. This is the famous vegetable sheep of the eastern South Island. Plants producing extremely compact, rounded masses up to 2 x 1 m diameter. From the other two species of *Haastia* it is easily distinguished by this growth habit, the other two species (*H. recurva* and *H. sinclairii*) having a more widely spreading, openly branched, distinctly leafy growth habit. *Haastia minor* is distinguished from *H. pulvinaris* by its much smaller size (only rarely forming hummocks up to 1 x 1 m), branchlets < 15 mm diameter, and by the distinctly whitish tomentum. *Haastia pulvinaris* could be confused with species of *Raoulia*, especially *R. bryoides*, *R. eximia* and *R. mammillaris* with which it sometimes grows. From *Raoulia*, *Haastia* is distinguished by the anther-cells which are not tailed, and by the leaves which are > 10 mm long. Recent molecular data suggests that *Haastia* is very closely allied to *Brachyglottis*.

DISTRIBUTION

Endemic. South Island: Marlborough to Canterbury (east of the main divide).

HABITAT

Subalpine and alpine fellfield and rocks among screes.

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2023 | Not Threatened

DETAILED TAXONOMY

FAMILY

Asteraceae

AUTHORITY

Haastia pulvinaris Hook.f.

SYNONYMS

Haastia pulvinaris Hook.f.



Julius rocks, Nelson, January. Photographer: John Smith-Dodsworth, Licence: CC BY-NC.



Near main ridge, inland Kaikoura. Photographer: Simon Moore, Licence: CC BY-SA.

ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes

ENDEMIC GENUS

Yes

ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

ECOLOGY

FLOWERING

November - January

FRUITING

December – February

LIFE CYCLE

Pappate cypselae are dispersed by wind (Thorsen et al., 2009).

PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

Difficult. Should not be removed from the wild.

OTHER INFORMATION

WHERE TO BUY

Not commercially available

PLANT OF THE MONTH

This plant has been featured as a Plant of the Month – see [Trilepidea: NZPCN newsletter for February 2018](#) for the full story.

ETYMOLOGY

haastia: After Haast

pulvinaris: From the Latin pulvinar 'a cushion' and -aris 'resembling', meaning resembling a cushion i.e. convex or rather flattened

NVS CODE

HAAPUL

CHROMOSOME NUMBER

2n = 60

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2017 | Not Threatened

2012 | Not Threatened

2009 | Not Threatened

2004 | Not Threatened

REFERENCING AND CITATIONS

REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

Allan, H.H. 1961: Flora of New Zealand. Vol. I, Government Printer, Wellington.

Thorsen, M.J.; Dickinson, K.J.M.; Seddon, P.J. 2009. Seed dispersal systems in the New Zealand flora. *Perspectives in Plant Ecology, Evolution and Systematics* 11: 285-309.

ATTRIBUTION

Description adapted from Allan (1961)

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NZPCN FACT SHEET CITATION

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MORE INFORMATION

<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/haastia-pulvinaris/>

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