

Aciphylla horrida

BIOSTATUS

Native – Endemic taxon


CATEGORY

Vascular

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Herbs - Dicotyledons other than Composites

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

A massive bright green plant growing up to 1 m tall, as single clumps or in small groups. **Leaves** pinnate 2-3 pairs, up to approximately 80 cm long; sheaths thick and coriaceous, approximately 50 mm wide at base, narrowing to 30 mm; stipules simple, about (100)-150-(250) mm long, pungent. **Petioles** thick, coriaceous, ribbed; margins cartilaginous, serrulate; internodes short. **Primary pinnae** up to approximately 40 cm x 2-(3) cm, very coriaceous, finely striate, midrib obscure, usually strongly curved, lanceolate, margins serrulate, apex pungent. **Flowering stems** approximately 150 cm tall, stout, strongly grooved, flowering through most of their length, inflorescence broad. **Bracts** numerous, the lower empty, or with ill-developed umbels. **Bract-sheath** approximately 55 x 35 mm; stipules up to 75 x 7 mm, distinctly ribbed; lamina simple, lanceolate, up to approximately 185 x 15 mm, narrowing from widest part about  **Umbels** roughly equal to bract-sheaths; rays numerous, up to 30 mm long. Umbellules of male plants on long slender rays, of females on shorter rays. Involucral bracts lanceolate. **Fruit** approximately 4 mm long, mericarps with 2 or 3 broad wings.

SIMILAR TAXA

Aciphylla ferox the leaves have a long (100-150 mm) petiole with only upper half of the leaf being divided, in *A. horrida* the leaf almost divides from base.

Also see taxonomic notes below.

DISTRIBUTION

Endemic. South Island, from Mount Uriah south, in higher rainfall areas favouring the western side of Southern Alps, more common towards the south.

HABITAT

Sub-alpine to Low-alpine (600-1400 m.a.s.l.) often common in mixed snow tussock-scrub and snow tussock-herbfield.

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2023 | Not Threatened

[Jump to previous conservation statuses](#)

DETAILED TAXONOMY

FAMILY

Apiaceae

AUTHORITY

Aciphylla horrida W.R.B.Oliv.



Hollyford Valley, December. Photographer: John Smith-Dodsworth, Licence: CC BY-NC.



Dingleburn. Photographer: John Barkla, Licence: CC BY.

TAXONOMIC NOTES

Dawson & LeComte suggest this species is part of the group with milky juice. They note it is also seen to hybridise; *A. horrida* x *A. similis* Temple Basin, = *A. latibracteata* (therefore dismissing this species level recognition) reported by J. W. Dawson.

An entity known as *Aciphylla* "Lomondi" is also similar to this species, "it is found in the dryer eastern areas (Livingstone Mts, Eyre Mts, Wakatipu Basin). It can be difficult distinguishing it from *A. aurea* where the two species meet. Generally, the leaf segments are wider and often but not always glaucous (Lyttle, *pers. comm.* 2021)".

ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes

ENDEMIC GENUS

No

ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

ECOLOGY

FLOWERING

November - January

FRUITING

December - February

LIFE CYCLE AND DISPERSAL

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

OTHER INFORMATION

ETYMOLOGY

aciphylla: From the Latin *acicula* 'needle' and the Greek *phyllum* 'leaf', meaning needle-leaf.

horrida: Prickly or bristly

NVS CODE

ACIHOR

CHROMOSOME NUMBER

2n = 22

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2017 | Not Threatened

2012 | Not Threatened

2009 | Not Threatened

2004 | Not Threatened

[Jump to current conservation status](#)

REGIONAL CONSERVATION STATUSES

Otago: 2024 | At Risk – Regionally Naturally Uncommon | Qualifiers: DPR, DPS, DPT, NS, Sp

REFERENCING AND CITATIONS

REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

Allan, H. H. 1961. Flora of New Zealand. Vol. 1. Wellington: Government Printer. pg. 486.

Dawson, J.W. LeComte, J.R. 1978. Research on *Aciphylla* - a progress report. *Tuatara* 23: pg. 49-67.

Lyttle, D. 2021. Personal communication on InaturalistNZ January 17th, 2021.

<https://inaturalist.nz/observations/68189913>

Mark, A. F. 2012. Above the Treeline: A Nature Guide to Alpine New Zealand. Craig Potton Publishing, Nelson. pg. 138.

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 2009 Vol. 11 No. 4 pp. 285-309

ATTRIBUTION

Description adapted by M. Ward from Allan (1961) and Mark (2012).

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MORE INFORMATION

<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/aciphylla-horrida/>

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