

Bulbinella gibbsii var. balanifera

COMMON NAME

Māori onion

SYNONYMS

None

FAMILY

Asphodelaceae

AUTHORITY

Bulbinella gibbsii var. *balanifera* L.B.Moore

FLORA CATEGORY

Vascular – Native

ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes

ENDEMIC GENUS

No

ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Herbs - Monocots

NVS CODE

BULBAL

CHROMOSOME NUMBER

2n = 14

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2017 | Not Threatened

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2012 | Not Threatened | Qualifiers: RR

2009 | Not Threatened

2004 | Not Threatened

DISTRIBUTION

Endemic. North Island and South Island. In the North Island known from the southern Ruahine and Tararua Ranges. In the South Island known from the ranges about Arthur's Pass south to Fiordland.

HABITAT

Alpine in free draining, open habitats such as tussock grassland, the bases of talus slopes and in herbfield. Rarely in subalpine scrub.

WETLAND PLANT INDICATOR STATUS RATING

FACU: Facultative Upland

Occasionally is a hydrophyte but usually occurs in uplands (non-wetlands).



Upper Hollyford, January. Photographer: John Smith-Dodsworth, Licence: CC BY-NC.



Gertrude Valley. Photographer: John Barkla, Licence: CC BY.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Subdioecious, diminutive, summer green, fleshy, lily up to 600 mm tall. **Leaves** up to 30 mm wide, strap-like, reddish green to dark green, fleshy. **Peduncle** mostly shorter than raceme, often exceeding leaves. **Raceme** mostly conical (rarely cylindrical), the axis visible between flowers. **Pedicels** 10–20 mm long, swollen below flower, elongating slightly after anthesis. **Bracts** shortly-acuminate, notably shorter than pedicel in flowering and fruiting material. **Flowers** 10–14 mm diameter, dark yellow, numerous, densely crowded; tepals patent, becoming erect and hardening as fruit matures. **Stamens** 6, < tepals; anthers mostly well filled with pollen. **Ovary** barrel-shaped, scarcely stipitate. **Capsules** barrel-shaped. **Seeds** dark and narrowly winged.

SIMILAR TAXA

Bulbinella gibbsii Cockayne var. *gibbsii* is a smaller plant than var. *balanifera* with shorter peduncles and pedicels. The subtending bracts greatly exceed the pedicels. The ovary and capsules are broadly ovoid rather than barrel-shaped, and are not slightly stipitate. *Bulbinella gibbsii* var. *gibbsii* is confined to Stewart Island/Rakiura.

FLOWERING

January–February

FLOWER COLOURS

Yellow

FRUITING

February–June

PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

Difficult—should not be removed from the wild. Has been cultivated with limited success in the more southerly parts of the country.

ETYMOLOGY

bulbinella: Little bulb

gibbsii: Named in honor of Frederick G Gibbs (1866–1953)

WHERE TO BUY

Not commercially available.

ATTRIBUTION

Description modified from: Moore & Edgar (1970).

REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

Moore LB, Edgar E. 1970. Flora of New Zealand, Volume II. Indigenous Tracheophyta: Monocotyledones except Gramineae. Government Printer, Wellington, NZ. 354 p.

MORE INFORMATION

<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/bulbinella-gibbsii-var-balanifera/>