

Myosotis australis

SYNONYMS

Myosotis australis var. *conspicua* Cheeseman, *Myosotis saxatilis* Petrie

FAMILY

Boraginaceae

AUTHORITY

Myosotis australis R.Br.

FLORA CATEGORY

Vascular – Native

ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes

ENDEMIC GENUS

No

ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Herbs - Dicotyledons other than Composites

NVS CODE

MYOAUS

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2017 | Not Threatened | Qualifiers: SO

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2012 | Not Threatened

2009 | Not Threatened

2004 | Not Threatened

DISTRIBUTION

?Indigenous. North and South Islands.

HABITAT

Montane to alpine. Mostly grassland, cliffs and other open rocky and stony places



Myosotis australis agg. (M. "australis yellow"), Rachel Range, Upper Awatere Valley. Photographer: Gillian M. Crowcroft, Date taken: 01/12/1994, Licence: All rights reserved.



Benmore Summit. Dec 1975. Photographer: Colin C. Ogle, Licence: CC BY-NC.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Gracile, tufted, perennial herb. Rosette usually single, leaves spatulate or lamina elliptic, 20-60 × 4-12 mm, tip rounded and ± mucronate, petiole, more or less equal to lamina-length, narrow but ill-defined; hairs on upper surface spreading, uniform, fine, crowded, often hooked, on undersurface sparser, shorter, retrorse. Lateral branches ascending or erect (not rooting from nodes), few to many, up to 300 mm long, internodes usually equal to or greater than leaves. Upper stem-leaves sessile, spatulate to oblong, mostly 10-15 mm long, tip subacute; hairs on upper surface silky, ± appressed, overlapping, on undersurface sparser, shorter, irregularly arranged. Cymes mostly ebracteate, except sometimes towards base, mostly simple and terminal, either on primary laterals or on secondary laterals arising from axils of stem-leaves; internodes between fruits greater than calyx; pedicels very short. Calyx c. 4 mm long, lobes cut for greater than half calyx length, narrow, subacute; hairs long and straight towards tips, shorter and hooked towards base, with very short sparse hairs overall. Corolla white or yellow, tube equal to or greater in length of calyx, widest at top, lobes rounded, concave; filaments very short, fixed below scales, anther-tips barely reaching scales; style more or less equal to tube length in flower. Nutlet 1.4-2.1 × 0.8-1.0 mm, ovate to ovate-elliptic, black.

SIMILAR TAXA

Even with the change in rank for *Myosotis australis* var. *lytteltonensis* (see de Lange et al. 2010), the remaining members of the *Myosotis australis* complex are in serious need of revision. Collectively these entities, unified here as *Myosotis australis* sensu lato can be recognised by the calyx which is 3-6 mm long and deeply lobed, and clad with numerous hooked (uncinate) hairs, and by the anther-tips not projecting above the scales. That said distinct entities can be recognised of which the most common entity is the yellow-flowered plant illustrated on this fact sheet and often known as *Myosotis* “australis yellow”, other entities included within *M. australis* have white flowers, and include *M. saxatilis* Petrie and *M. “australis small white”*. There is good evidence that all of these warrant elevation to species rank. However, to do so would at this stage be premature until a full comparison with the type of *M. australis* (which is Australian) is undertaken along with the critical examination of the range of variation in Australian *M. australis*. Further, there are other small, white-flowered plants present in Central Otago that might be palced within *M. australis*, and these too require careful study.

FLOWERING

October - March

FLOWER COLOURS

White, Yellow

FRUITING

December - May

PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

Easily grown from fresh seed and in ideal conditions will freely self sow in gardens, However, along with most other indigenous *Myosotis*, members of the *M. australis* complex are prone to mildew and rust infections. They also dislike humid climates.

ETYMOLOGY

myosotis: Mouse-eared

australis: Southern

WHERE TO BUY

Not commercially available

ATTRIBUTION

Fact Sheet prepared for NZPCN by P.J. de Lange 1 February 2008. Description based on Allan (1961).

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REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

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

de Lange, P.J.; Heenan, P.B.; Norton, D.A.; Rolfe, J.R.; Sawyer, J.W.D. 2010: *Threatened Plants of New Zealand*. Canterbury University Press, Christchurch.

NZPCN FACT SHEET CITATION

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(Date website was queried)

MORE INFORMATION

<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/myosotis-australis/>

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