

Lobelia fugax

BIOSTATUS

Native – Endemic taxon

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2023 | Threatened – Nationally Critical | Qualifiers: CD, EF, RR, Sp

[Jump to previous conservation statuses](#)

CATEGORY

Vascular

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Herbs - Dicotyledons other than Composites

FLOWER COLOURS

Violet/Purple, White

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Diminutive, creeping, prostrate, glabrous herb; rooting at leaf nodes. Leaves alternate, upright to spreading; lamina 3.0–6.0 × 3.0–4.0 mm, obovate, oblong, broadly elliptic, green, sometimes blotched purple-brown near base and on main veins, midvein faint, lateral veins faint to obscure, margin with 5–7 prominent teeth or serrations; petiole 0.5–2.0 × 0.6–0.9 mm. Flowers hermaphrodite, resupinate, axillary, solitary; peduncle 0.5–5.7 mm long. Calyx with short tube adnate to ovary; lobes 5, 0.6–1.3 × 0.3–0.4 mm, green, narrowly triangular to lanceolate; apex subacute and with conspicuous translucent tip. Corolla up to 3.5 mm long in late bud, 1.2–2.5 mm diameter when open, white; tube 1.5–2.2 × c.0.8 mm, fused; lobes 4–5, 0.9–1.3 × 0.5–0.7 mm, narrow lanceolate, recurved, apex subacute, front 2–3 lobes flushed green near sinus. Filaments 2.0–2.2 × 0.1–0.2 mm, fused below anthers, adnate to corolla tube on lower third, white in distal part, becoming translucent and flushed green toward proximal part. Anthers 0.4–0.5 mm long, united into a tube around style, yellow-brown to light brown. Nectary annular, c. 0.15 mm high, green; apex sparsely hairy, hairs < 0.1 mm long. Ovary 1.2–2.0 × 0.8–1.2 mm, green, apex obtuse. Style 2.0–2.4 × 0.2–0.3 mm wide, white, exserted beyond anthers. Stigma bilobed, lobes 0.2–0.4 × 0.2–0.4 mm, pink, subtended by whorl of hairs, hairs < 0.1 mm long. Capsule 2.3–2.9 × 1.6–2.2 mm, laterally compressed; thin-walled, seeds visible through wall, indehiscent and without apical valves, disintegrating with age; apex crowned with persistent style base; base obtuse to slightly cuneate. Seed buff-brown, obovate-oblong to broadly elliptic, 0.4–0.5 mm long.

SIMILAR TAXA

Distinguished from *Lobelia fatiscens* Heenan by its allopatric distribution, much smaller flowers and diploid ($2n = 14$) chromosome number

DISTRIBUTION

Endemic. New Zealand; South Island (north west Nelson)

HABITAT

Montane. A species of the ephemeral and shallow margins of cirque lakes, in areas subjected to frequent cycles of inundation and wave-wash where it grows on cobble pavement within a matrix of accumulated fine silts, peat and mosses



Lobelia fugax. Photographer: Peter B. Heenan, Licence: CC BY-NC.



Lobelia fugax. Photographer: Simon Walls, Licence: CC BY-NC.

THREATS

Known from five sites that all receive legal protection within Kahurangi National Park, with an estimated total area of occupancy of c.280 square m and the estimated total cover for the species is less than 25 square m. At all sites it is threatened by introduced weeds and there is some suggestion of ongoing habitat deterioration. Previously recorded as *Hypsela* aff. *rivalis* (CHR 369981; Burgoo Stream) in de Lange et al., 2004, Threatened and uncommon plants of New Zealand, New Zealand Journal of Botany 42: 45-76.

GENUS

Lobelia

FAMILY

Campanulaceae

AUTHORITY

Lobelia fugax Heenan, S.P.Courtney et P.N.Johnson

SYNONYMS

None (described in 2008)

ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes

ENDEMIC GENUS

No

ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

FLOWERING

November - February

FRUITING

December - April

PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

Difficult. Should not be removed from the wild.

ETYMOLOGY

lobelia: Named after Lobel, pioneer botanist

fugax: From the Latin fugax 'fleeting, transitory, ephemeral'

CHROMOSOME NUMBER

2n = 14

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2017 | Threatened – Nationally Critical | Qualifiers: CD, EF, RR, Sp

2012 | Threatened – Nationally Critical | Qualifiers: CD, EF, RR, Sp

2009 | Threatened – Nationally Critical | Qualifiers: EF, RR

2004 | Threatened – Nationally Critical

[Jump to current conservation status](#)

REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

Heenan et al. 2008: Generic placement in *Lobelia* and revised taxonomy for New Zealand species previously in *Hypsela* and *Isotoma* (Lobeliaceae). New Zealand Journal of Botany 46: 87–100

ATTRIBUTION

Description modified from Heenan et al. (2008).

MORE INFORMATION

<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/lobelia-fugax/>

