

Colobanthus brevisepalus

COMMON NAME

pin cushion

FAMILY

Caryophyllaceae

AUTHORITY

Colobanthus brevisepalus Kirk

FLORA CATEGORY

Vascular – Native

ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes

ENDEMIC GENUS

No

ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Herbs - Dicotyledons other than Composites

NVS CODE

COLBRE

CHROMOSOME NUMBER

2n = c.80-82

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2017 | At Risk – Declining | Qualifiers: DP, Sp

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2012 | At Risk – Naturally Uncommon | Qualifiers: PD, Sp

2009 | At Risk – Naturally Uncommon

2004 | Data Deficient

BRIEF DESCRIPTION

Cushion plant up to 8 cm across, many short stiff tightly packed branches closely covered with leaves. **Leaves** incurved towards stem, densely overlapping, rounded on back, 2–3 mm long; long needle-like tips, no mid-rib evident. **Flower stalks** short. **Flowers** 3 mm long, with 5 sepals, broader than leaves, with thickened midrib, ending in short needle-like tip.

DISTRIBUTION

Endemic. New Zealand: South Island (east of main divide from Marlborough southwards).

HABITAT

On dry mountains, especially on limestone (and associated rendzina soils) schist outcrops, rocks, sandy banks and slopes.

SIMILAR TAXA

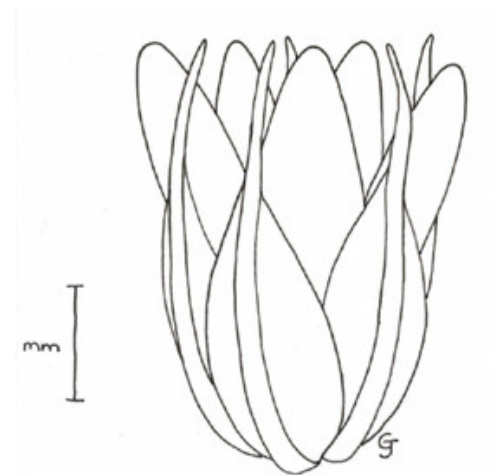
Colobanthus canaliculatus, *C. buchananii*. *C. brevisepalus* has overlapping, shorter leaves than *C. canaliculatus* with its spreading, longer leaves. *C. buchananii* has sepals longer than petals.

FLOWERING

No information available



Close up of plant. Photographer: Brian P. Molloy, Licence: CC BY-NC.



Drawing by Cathy Jones. Photographer: Cathy Jones, Licence: CC BY.

FLOWER COLOURS

Green

FRUITING

No information available

LIFE CYCLE

Winged seeds are dispersed by water and possibly also wind and ballistic projection (Thorsen et al., 2009).

PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

Small divisions can be grown but the species is tricky, and does best in pots within an alpine house.

THREATS

Colobanthus brevisepalus is probably not seriously threatened. However in parts of its range it has been replaced by aggressive introduced weeds. Furthermore it is not often collected, suggesting that it has either declined or is being overlooked by modern plant collectors.

ETYMOLOGY

colobanthus: Mutilated flower with no petals

brevisepalus: Short sepal

ATTRIBUTION

Fact sheet prepared by P.J. de Lange for NZPCN (1 June 2013).

REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

Thorsen MJ, Dickinson KJM, Seddon PJ. 2009. Seed dispersal systems in the New Zealand flora. *Perspectives in Plant Ecology, Evolution and Systematics* 11: 285–309. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ppees.2009.06.001>.

NZPCN FACT SHEET CITATION

Please cite as: de Lange, P.J. (Year at time of access): *Colobanthus brevisepalus* Fact Sheet (content continuously updated). New Zealand Plant Conservation Network.

<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/colobanthus-brevisepalus/> (Date website was queried)

MORE INFORMATION

<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/colobanthus-brevisepalus/>