

Colobanthus squarrosus subsp. drucei

COMMON NAME

colobanthus

SYNONYMS

None (described in 1999)

FAMILY

Caryophyllaceae

AUTHORITY

Colobanthus squarrosus subsp. drucei Sneddon

FLORA CATEGORY

Vascular – Native

ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes

ENDEMIC GENUS

No

ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Herbs - Dicotyledons other than Composites

NVS CODE

COLSSD

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2017 | At Risk – Naturally Uncommon | Qualifiers: RR

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2012 | At Risk – Naturally Uncommon | Qualifiers: RR

2009 | At Risk – Naturally Uncommon

2004 | Range Restricted

DISTRIBUTION

Endemic. New Zealand: South Island (north-west Nelson, known only from Garibaldi Ridge, Pike Peak, and the Matiri Range in Kahurangi National Park).

HABITAT

Alpine. On limestone-marble rock outcrops, cliffs, and talus slopes, less commonly found on skeletal, stony soils in sparse grassland.



The Haystack, Matiri Range, Kahurangi National Park. Photographer: Melissa Hutchison, Date taken: 30/01/2010, Licence: CC BY-NC.



Pike Peak, Kahurangi National Park. Photographer: Melissa Hutchison, Date taken: 08/02/2009, Licence: CC BY-NC.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

A compact multi-branched cushion up to 250 mm diameter and 50–75 mm high. Branches leafy for much of length with c.5–8 pairs of green leaves and numerous persistent, pale brown dead leaves below; internodes 0.1–10.5 mm long. Leaves rigid, spreading to ascending and ± imbricate; sheath 0.6–2.5 mm long; blade subulate, 3–11 mm long (including the translucent tip), 0.6–1.4 mm wide, with colourless borders c.0.1 mm wide, becoming ± channelled when dry, gradually narrowed into an acicular tip 0.5–1.9 mm long. Inflorescence a solitary flower on a bracteolate peduncle, lateral near branch apex. Flowers predominantly 5-merous, 3.5–5.5 mm diameter. Sepals 4–5, persistent, ovate, ovate-triangular or broadly ovate-triangular, 3.0–5.0 × 1.2–2.6 mm, predominantly pale green with translucent or whitish margins, margins ± membranous, keel not thickened, inconspicuous, apex usually acute and apiculate, apiculus 0.2–4.6 mm long. Petals 0. Stamens 4–5, 2.3–5.0 mm long; anthers pale yellow. Ovary ovoid, green at flowering; ovules 9–44; styles 4 or 5, 1–2 mm long. Peduncles ± hidden amongst leaves or shortly exerted at fruiting, 2.3–19.0 mm long, with 1–3 pairs of foliose bracteoles; bracteoles 3.0–7.5 mm long with a shortly apiculate to acicular tip 0.2–0.9 mm long. Capsule splitting to c.½, 4- or 5-valved, valves from 1 mm shorter to 1.5 mm longer than sepals. Seeds brown, shiny, colliculate dorsally to ± smooth laterally, ± obliquely reniform, 0.5–0.85 × 0.4–0.7 mm.

SIMILAR TAXA

Differs from *C. squarrosus* Cheeseman subsp. *squarrosus* in having greener flowers, with distinctly apiculate sepals, and included to only shortly exerted stamens, and styles 1–2 mm cf. 1.5–3.5 mm long.

FLOWERING

November – January

FLOWER COLOURS

Green, White

FRUITING

January – March

PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

Unknown in cultivation.

THREATS

A Naturally Uncommon, range-restricted, endemic of limestone/marble mountain ranges within Kahurangi National Park. There are no known threats.

ETYMOLOGY

colobanthus: Mutilated flower with no petals

drucei: Named after Anthony (Tony) Peter Druce, one of New Zealand's most respected field botanist (1920–1999).

NEW ZEALAND BOTANICAL HISTORY

For a brief biography for this plant is named, see this article in [Te Ara - The Encyclopedia of New Zealand](#).

Hundreds of Tony's famed plant lists can be found [here](#) and back-issues of regional Botanical Society Journals which he contributed can be accessed [here](#).

ATTRIBUTION

Description modified from: Sneddon. (1999)

REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

Sneddon B.V. 1999: The taxonomy and breeding system of *Colobanthus squarrosus* (Caryophyllaceae). *New Zealand Journal of Botany* 37: 195–204.

MORE INFORMATION

<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/colobanthus-squarrosus-subsp-drucei/>