

Euchiton ensifer

COMMON NAME

creeping cudweed

SYNONYMS

Gnaphalium ensifer D.G.Drury, Euchiton ensifer (D.G.Drury) Anderb. (nom. illegit.)

FAMILY

Asteraceae

AUTHORITY

Euchiton ensifer (D.G.Drury) Holub

FLORA CATEGORY

Vascular – Native

ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes

ENDEMIC GENUS

No

ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Herbs - Dicotyledonous composites

NVS CODE

EUCENS

CHROMOSOME NUMBER

2n = 28

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2017 | Threatened – Nationally Endangered | Qualifiers: DP, PD, RR, Sp

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2012 | Threatened – Nationally Endangered | Qualifiers: PD, RR, Sp

2009 | Data Deficient

2004 | Sparse

DISTRIBUTION

Endemic. North and South Islands. In the North Island known from the Kaingaroa Plain (Matea Road) and Kaimanawa Ranges. In the South rather locally distributed from Nelson south to Southland but not, apparently in Westland.

HABITAT

Montane to alpine in damp sites, particularly tarn and other ephemeral pond margins, or in seepages and flushes within tussock grassland. Sometimes on stream banks.

WETLAND PLANT INDICATOR STATUS RATING

FACW: Facultative Wetland

Usually is a hydrophyte but occasionally found in uplands (non-wetlands).



Euchiton ensifer. Photographer: John Smith-Dodsworth, Licence: CC BY-NC.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Stoloniferous, creeping perennial. Stems 1-4(-6), decumbent to ascending, spreading, simple, 20-100 mm tall. Leaves mainly basal; these short-petiolate, 13-50 x 1-5 mm, narrow-elliptic to linear, cuneate, acute, mucronate, densely covered in closely appressed white indumentum on lower surface except mid-vein, almost glabrous to sparsely tomentose above; cauline leaves only slightly reducing up stem, linear, apetiolate. Capitula 1-2 mm diameter, 1-9 in loose terminal clusters; longest subtending leaves < to marginally > diameter of cluster. Involucral bracts 4.2-5 mm, elliptic-oblong, obtuse to subacute; stereome green; lamina pale brown with darker markings toward base; gap and margins tinged pale to bright rose or red-purple. Achenes 0.8-1 mm long, covered with short antrorse hairs.

SIMILAR TAXA

Most similar to *E. delicatus* (D.G.Drury) Holub from which it differs by the narrow-elliptic to linear rather than elliptic-oblong to oblong leaves, longer involucral bracts (4.2-5 cf 3.5-4 mm in *E. delicatus*), rather openly diffuse rather than compact fruiting head, and larger achenes (0.8-1 mm cf. 0.7-0.8 mm long in *E. delicatus*) bearing longer hairs.

FLOWERING

October - January

FRUITING

November - April

LIFE CYCLE

Pappate cypselae are dispersed by wind and water (Thorsen et al., 2009).

PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

Easily grown from fresh seed and rooted pieces. Best kept in a partially submerged pot, placed in full sun.

THREATS

A naturally uncommon, biologically sparse species which, based on current information does not appear to under any serious threat. However, weeds encroaching on montane wetlands are threatening a few populations.

ETYMOLOGY

euchiton: From the Greek eu (good) and chiton (tunic or covering)

ATTRIBUTION

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

REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

Thorsen, M.J.; Dickinson, K.J.M.; Seddon, P.J. 2009. Seed dispersal systems in the New Zealand flora. *Perspectives in Plant Ecology, Evolution and Systematics* 11: 285-309.

NZPCN FACT SHEET CITATION

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MORE INFORMATION

<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/euchiton-ensifer/>