

Euchiton polylepis

SYNONYMS

Gnaphalium paludosum var. polylepis Drury, Gnaphalium polylepis (Drury) C.Webb

FAMILY

Asteraceae

AUTHORITY

Euchiton polylepis (D.G.Drury) Breitw. et J.M.Ward

FLORA CATEGORY

Vascular – Native

ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes

ENDEMIC GENUS

No

ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Herbs - Dicotyledonous composites

NVS CODE

EUCPOL

CHROMOSOME NUMBER

2n = 28

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2017 | At Risk – Naturally Uncommon | Qualifiers: DP, PD, Sp

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

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

2009 | At Risk – Naturally Uncommon

2004 | Data Deficient

DISTRIBUTION

Endemic to New Zealand. Mostly montane in the North Island (Central Volcanic Plateau and Mt Taranaki/Egmont) and on coast of North Island near Manaia, Whanganui and eastern Wairarapa; throughout the South Island, though seemingly rare in Westland.

HABITAT

Lowland to subalpine in damp places, especially stream sides and damp hollows in grassland, cliffs and rocky laces.

WETLAND PLANT INDICATOR STATUS RATING

FACW: Facultative Wetland

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



Manuherikia River, Otago. Photographer: John Barkla, Licence: CC BY.



Manuherikia River, Otago. Photographer: John Barkla, Licence: CC BY.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Stoloniferous, perennial daisy. Stems 1-2, ascending, 1-6 cm tall. Leaves mostly basal, these elliptic to narrow-obovate, apex often rounded to acute with a small sharp projecting tip (mucronate), 5-15 (-30) × (1-)4(-5) mm, densely white-tomentose on the under sides except the mid vein, upper sides olive green to grey-green usually hairless. Upper stem leaves 1-3(-5), scale-like, ovate-triangular, almost clasping around stem (amplexicaul). Flower heads (capitula) 1-2 mm diameter, solitary, buried amongst foliage when flowering, exceeding leaves when fruiting. Involucral bracts elliptic-oblong, obtuse, 3.2-4(-4.5) mm long, central portion green, apex often tinged reddish-purple at apex, margins pale to mid-brown, with darker markings at base. Achenes (seeds) 0.7-1 mm, sparsely papillate (with round projections).

SIMILAR TAXA

Morphologically *E. polylepis* is only likely to be confused with *E. paludosus*. That species differs from *E. polylepis* by its usually folded, moderately tomentose upper leaf surfaces. The leaves are 0.5-2(-5) mm broad and are not mucronate. In *E. paludosus* the involucral bracts are 3.2-4(-4.5) mm long, and perfect flowers number 1-3(-5) rather than the (2-)4(-7) seen in *E. polylepis*. The two species are often sympatric but *E. polylepis* is the only one known to also grow in lowland habitats.

FLOWERING

November - February

FRUITING

December to April

LIFE CYCLE

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

PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

Easily grown from seed and rooted pieces of stem.

THREATS

Described by Drury (1972), and believed to be uncommon. Although it would seem unlikely to be seriously threatened the exact status of this species, perhaps because it is so small and easily over-looked, is uncertain and it would be vulnerable to competition from taller weeds.

ETYMOLOGY

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

polylepis: With many scales

ATTRIBUTION

Amended distribution, including Westland. C C Ogle

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

MORE INFORMATION

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